

Huskers Illustrated

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Many Weapons

Huskers putting it all together in challenging stretch run



Brian Hill

ERIC CROUCH and Tracey Wistrom are pictured on the cover of our 2001 Football Yearbook, and they have certainly been key components in the Huskers' 10-0 start.

But they've had plenty of help.

Consider that Crouch has been limited to a total of 70 yards rushing in the last two games.

And Wistrom, who has been battling a knee injury, has had one catch in the last three games.

The Huskers are where they are because a number of players have stepped up.

First-year I-back starter Dahrnan Diedrick has taken over the lead in the Big 12 in rushing with six 100-yard games and 1,097 yards, just 57 yards short NU's 2000 leader, Dan Alexander.

Split end Wilson Thomas, who had caught one pass coming into this season, has 12 receptions in the last two games and 34 for the season. Last year's leading receiver, Matt Davison, finished with 21 catches.

Backup I-back Thunder Collins has contributed 559 yards rushing and caught 14 passes.

There are many others who have made significant contributions offensively, including the line, which has made tremendous strides.

The Husker offense has received a huge lift from the defense and special teams, two areas which have improved dramatically since last season.

In Saturday's 51-7 romp over Kansas, the Blackshirts limited the Jayhawks to minus-6 yards rushing and 12 yards total offense in the first half.

ON THE COVER

Nebraska linebacker Scott Shanle tackles KU quarterback Mario Kinsey for a loss. Photo by Scott Bruhn

Nebraska had two quarterback sacks against Kansas and leads the Big 12 with 33, eight more than it had all of last season.

Keyuo Craver returned a punt 50 yards to give the Huskers a short field for their second touchdown, and Ben Cornelsen topped that by taking a Kansas punt 71 yards for a touchdown in the fourth quarter.

Coach Frank Solich always stresses that a team must perform well in all three areas — offense, defense and special teams — and have great leadership.

Captains Crouch, Wistrom, Dave Volk, Keyuo Craver and Jeremy Slechta have helped provide that leadership. They are part of a 23-member senior class that will be playing its final home game when the Huskers play host to Kansas State this week. Contributing editor Mike Babcock takes a look at the senior class in this issue of *Huskers Illustrated*.

Our "senior" edition also includes the player profile on linebacker Mark Vedral and State of the Huskers on defensive back Wes Woodward.

The 2001 seniors have a chance to finish the season and their careers in grand fashion. With the No. 1 ranking in the BCS poll, Nebraska controls its own destiny. Four more victories would give Solich his first national championship.

Kansas State is the next obstacle, and the Wildcats are on the rebound after a shocking four-game losing streak. They appear to be back after dismantling Iowa State 42-3 in Ames and have not allowed a touchdown in nine quarters.

Then it's off to Colorado and a possible trip to Irving, Texas, for the Big 12 title game.

If the Huskers get to the Jan. 3 BCS title game in the Rose Bowl, they definitely will have earned it.

This team certainly has the talent, depth and leadership to get there. ■



Huskers Illustrated

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14 Seniors

Defensive tackle Jeremy Slechta, one of 23 Nebraska seniors, isn't ready for his college career to end. *By Mike Babcock*

NEXT ISSUE

The review of the Kansas State game will be mailed Nov. 12.

Still Roommates

Keyuo Craver and Demoine Adams hit it off when they reported with the other members of the Nebraska football team's scholarship recruiting class in the late summer of 1998.

The connection was immediate — and as it turned out, enduring. The two have been roommates since two-day-practices began four years ago. They've never had an argument during that time.

And they've become best friends, extremely close.

"A lot of people come in and out of your life, and they change," Craver said. "But Demoine has pretty much been the same the whole time through. He's never changed on me."

"As out-going as I am and as friendly as I am, and as many people as I know, I don't let a lot of people into my life or get close to me. He's one of those few persons."

Adams is "just like my big brother," said Craver.

Adams echoes that sentiment, describing Craver as "one of the persons in my life that really helped me through the hard times. It's a blessing to have him around," Adams said.

Next season, however, Craver won't be around. He's one of 23 Cornhusker seniors who will be playing in their final home game when Kansas State comes to Memorial Stadium.

Craver was one of three in his scholarship recruiting class to play without redshirting, while Adams was among the rest who did. So even though they came in together, they'll leave separately. That won't be easy. "It'll be a real big change," said Adams. "There won't be another Keyuo."

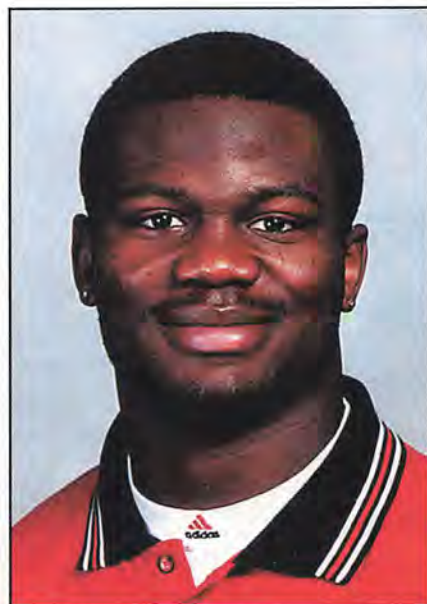
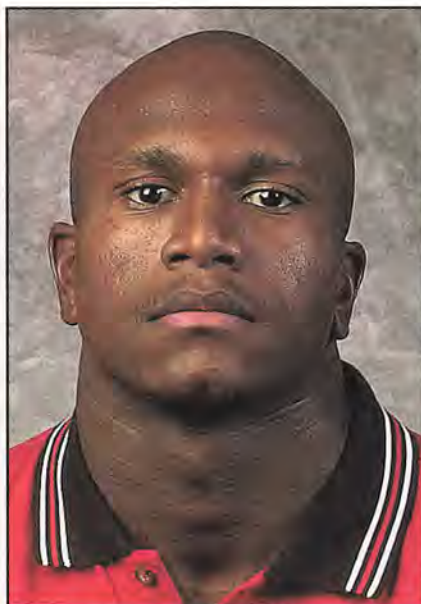
Though he could change his mind between now and then, Adams doesn't plan to find a new roommate for his final season at Nebraska. "I'll probably stay by myself," he said.

But he'll have an apartment large enough so that Craver will have a place to stay.

"I said, 'Well, I'll still pay for the other half of the rent,'" said Craver, whose prospects for a professional football career appear to be very good. "He got all excited about that."

Neither could explain exactly why they have connected. For one thing, they were both quiet, Adams probably more so than Craver. And for another, "we both liked to laugh," Adams said.

"We're both just goofy at times. We've both got crazy-sounding



Demoine Adams (left) and Keyuo Craver were members of the 1998 recruiting class.

laughs."

But their connection transcends the superficial and goes far beyond what can be easily explained. More than laughter or like personalities, their friendship is based on shared spirituality.

"We go to church together, pray together and have Bible study together," said Adams.

Because of that spirituality and the faith that is an essential part of it, as well as Adams' friendship, Craver never succumbed to the homesickness of his first few months at Nebraska.

He missed his home in the small east Texas town of Harleton.

"But I've always been one of those types that's open for anything. So when I came here, I was ready to leave Texas," he said. "I was looking forward to getting here."

Craver arrived in the summer and worked out with his new teammates. And when the rest of the newcomers reported for practice, he tried to help them adjust to their new surroundings.

Not everyone stayed, of course. Attrition is to be expected.

But of the 21 freshmen in the 1998 scholarship recruiting class, only one never played a down for the Cornhuskers — Shawn McGann, a wingback from Granger, Ind.

Craver attaches no significance to that, one way or the other.

"Everybody, whether they believe it or not, I think their life's already

planned out for them," he said. "I think there's a power beyond what we know that already has our life in store for us. I don't really read into it a lot of stuff when people have a change of events. You never know what to expect."

Defensive tackle Jason Lohr — another of those who played without redshirting — suffered a season-ending knee injury in the third game, for example. "You never know when," said Craver.

Like the rest of his senior teammates, his time at Nebraska has gone quickly.

"It's crazy just to notice how much I've changed as well as the other guys that I've grown up around these last four years," Craver said. "For the most part it's been a great experience."

"You don't really realize how special the time you had here was until you're gone."

He has mixed emotions about the prospect of moving on. "It's kind of hard to swallow," he said. "This has been a part of my life for the last four years. Now I'm going to have to be out of school and get out of this routine of class and the media and all this other stuff. But this is a blessing."

So are the friendships he has forged, including the special one with Adams.

"I'll miss him a lot," Adams said. "But at the same time, you know, he'll still be watching me."

That's what friends, and brothers, are for. ■

CATCH THIS

Going into the Kansas game, split end Wilson Thomas needed just two pass receptions to bring his season's total to 30. Only two other Cornhuskers have caught at least 30 in a season since 1983. Split end Matt Davison had 32 receptions in 1998. Tight end Johnny Mitchell had 31 in 1991.

Thomas had 28 catches for 442 yards and three touchdowns going into the Kansas game. In his two previous seasons, the junior from Omaha had just one reception — against the Jayhawks.

"I wouldn't say he's been a total surprise," said Coach Frank Solich. "I think everybody felt he had the ability to do what he's doing. He's come forward and been that kind of player."

Quarterback Eric Crouch agreed with Solich. "To be honest with you, I knew Wilson was going to have to come up with a lot of big plays this year, (that) he was going to have to step up and be a leader as far as the receivers are concerned, as far as this offense is concerned," Crouch said.



Wilson Thomas

"He's really done that. He's come up with big plays when we've called on him."

The 6-foot-6, 215-pound Thomas "is a great athlete who's really a mismatch out there," said Crouch. "We expect a lot of great things out of him. He really believes in himself."

Thomas is making things easier for him, Crouch said. "I'm putting the ball up, not exactly in the right place all the time, and he's coming down and making a great play."

HOOPS, TOO

Thomas is expected to again join Coach Barry Collier's basketball team when football season is finished. He provided defense and rebounding off the bench last season.

"I'd like to see him make as much improvement in basketball from football season as he made in football from the basketball season," Collier said.

"I'm excited for Wilson Thomas and for our football team, the great success they're having. He comes over at the training table and sits and talks with our guys at dinner."

"I congratulate him and talk with him more about football. We don't talk about basketball because that's (football) where his focus needs to be. And it is."

The football team's perennial success is "one of those good news, bad news deals," said Collier. "The good news is, the Huskers are playing into January in football, and the bad news is, the basketball team doesn't get Wilson maybe until then. But that's down the road."

"We'll certainly welcome Wilson back. But there's a lot of football left, and who knows how he feels and what the situation is when it's (football) all over?" ■

QUICK HITS

What's Happening In Nebraska Athletics?

GETTING HIS KICKS

Cornhusker punter Kyle Larson was chosen as the Big 12 "Special Teams Player of the Week," after averaging 38.2 yards on a career-high 10 punts against Oklahoma. More significant than his average, however, was the fact that he placed five of the punts inside the Sooners' 20-yard line.

One of those five punts was a career-high 68-yarder.

"I wasn't expecting that great of an honor, the Big 12 award, but I'm very humbled to get that and very pleased with it," said Larson, a sophomore walk-on from tiny Funk, Neb.

Larson credited with those on the punt coverage team for his success.

"You have to be a team player, do what's right for the team," he said. "I just want to go out there each time and play for my team, do what's best for the team."

That can mean sacrificing personal statistics.

His season's punting average dropped following the Oklahoma game, but "as a punter, you've got to take into account you have pooch punts as well as the long balls you need to hit," Larson said.

RISE TO THE OCCASION

Senior middle linebacker Jamie Burrow was chosen as the Big 12 "Defensive Player of the Week" and the "Bronco Nagurski National Defender of the Week" by the Football Writers Association of America after making a career-high 17 tackles in the 20-10 victory against Oklahoma.

His total was adjusted from 16 after a review of game tape.

"I expect myself to make a lot of tackles and make plays. It's frustrating for me when I'm out there 30, 40 snaps and I make like two tackles because a middle linebacker in a program like this shouldn't have that low of (a number of) tackles," said Burrow. "They should factor in the game."

"As long as I have somewhat of an impact on the game, I'm happy with how I played."

Burrow earned praise from position coach and defensive coordinator Craig Bohl for his performance against the Sooners. "I think he's probably coming as close to maxing out his talent as any 'Mike' backer we've had here," Bohl said. "It typifies what the heart and soul of our program is about, a guy that when his number is called, he's ready to go. He's never been a guy that's ever been moping around."

"He's always been up-beat, a positive team player. First of all, it's a credit to him and his family, his demeanor, his attitude. And beyond that, he's really made the most of his opportunities."

"Did it surprise me? No. Did it make me feel good? Yes."

INJURIOUS EFFECTS

Well into the season, Nebraska has managed to avoid the injury pitfalls that have created significant problems for many programs. "If you're going to be in line to win any kind of championship, you've got to have some fortune on your side as well as excellent players," said Coach Frank Solich.

Starting nose tackle Jason Lohr was lost for the season after suffering a knee injury in the Notre Dame game. And offensive linemen Jon Dawson and Chris Loos, both of whom would have challenged for starting positions, have missed the entire season because of injuries.

In addition, back-ups Lannie Hopkins, a rover, and Clifford Brye, a wingback, have been sidelined. And there have been others. But "to a degree, we've had some fortune this year," Solich said. "We've been somewhat beat up. We've lost a few guys. But it hasn't been a wholesale kind of deal, where we've lost numbers to the point we haven't been able to put a good team on the field."

SQUASH FEST

Offensive guard Toniu Fonoti shattered the school single-game record for "pancake" blocks against Texas Tech with 32. The previous record, set by Russ Hochstein, was 23.

Fonoti is on pace to break his own single-season record of 155 "pancakes." The 6-foot-4, 360-pound junior from Hauula, Hawaii was chosen to the Sportsline.com Midseason All-America team.

Fonoti is among 12 semifinalists for the 2001 Lombardi Award. The list, which includes Oklahoma linebacker Rocky Calmus, will be trimmed to four the week of Nov. 11.

The Houston Rotary Club sponsors the award. Former Cornhusker center Dominic Raiola was a runner-up for the award last season, won by Florida State's Jamal Reynolds. ■

Learning From Teammates

Defensive back Woodward has seen dramatic changes in his five years in the Nebraska football program



Mike BABCOCK

NO SOONER WAS Wes Woodward issued a No. 20 jersey during his freshman year at Nebraska than his proud dad began wearing a replica No. 20 Cornhusker jersey and cap to games.

Woodward was uncomfortable at first, to the point of embarrassment.

"Dad, I'm just a walk-on," he would say. "Why do you have to go and do that?"

Woodward's reaction wasn't all that unusual for a college freshman. It's often difficult for 19-year-olds to acknowledge affection for their parents. Such displays aren't cool.

Or so he thought until he watched Cornhusker teammates Mike Brown and Ralph Brown around their parents and the parents of others — including his. When he first introduced his parents to the Browns, "they gave them (his parents) a hug right away," said Woodward.

Ralph, in particular, was a "big hugger," he said.

As a result, his attitude toward such public displays changed. "I'm like, 'What am I doing here? I'm not giving them enough respect. I'm not cherishing the moment I have here enough,'" Woodward said. "After I kind of realized how they treated their parents, how happy they were, I was like, 'I'm not embarrassed that my dad's happy to see me out there and wearing my jersey.'"

From then on, he said, whenever he saw his parents, he made sure to remind them how much he loved them, and "started giving them hugs all the time. It kind of shifted my outlook from being embarrassed to being like, 'Why would I be embarrassed about my parents being happy for me?'"

"Those are just little things that you pick up on from other players."

Those little things, a myriad over the time he's been at Nebraska, are what have made the experience most meaningful for Woodward, a fifth-year senior defensive back from Omaha.

He has a national championship ring, from his redshirt season. He has been a part of two Big 12 championship teams. And he has earned three letters, with a fourth after this season.

He has been a part of the program as it has undergone dramatic changes. Tom Osborne stepped aside and Frank Solich succeeded him as head coach. Charlie McBride retired and Craig Bohl became the defensive coordinator. And Memorial Stadium was given skyboxes and FieldTurf.

He and Jeff Hemje, another fifth-year senior, were talking about those things recently. Remember when Osborne was the coach? Remember when Scott Frost was the quarter-

back? Remember when they dressed for practice in the north fieldhouse locker room and played on the scout team?

"If you think of everything that has transpired, it seems like it has been a long time," Woodward said. "But if you take it today, you go, 'Man, I'm almost done. It's gone by quick.'"

It seems as if it were only yesterday that he was commuting from Omaha to Lincoln for workouts during the summer before his freshman year. Eric Crouch, against whom he competed in high school track, suggested they might car-pool, and that's when he met Mic Boettner, also a walk-on.

Crouch, who told him about the conditioning workouts, and Boettner were from Millard North. And he was from Creighton Prep. But they would all be teammates at Nebraska.

Woodward had considered the University of Nebraska-Omaha, but after a recruiting visit to Nebraska, during which Osborne paid personal attention to him and his family, he had no doubts about where he wanted to go. And his parents provided the financial support that enabled him to walk on.

He has been on scholarship for one spring semester. And he has worked during the summers. But otherwise, his parents have had to pay the rent and tuition, and help with his car payments.

"I don't know what I would do if I didn't have the support of my family," he said. "There's no way. They've had to bear the full financial burden for me to live my dream."

In return, he has earned second-team academic all-conference recognition twice and has been on the Big 12 Commissioner's Academic Honor Roll five times. He will graduate in December, with a degree in construction management. He is considering law school in the future.

On the football field, he has played defensive back and special teams. He got in the first game for which he was eligible as a redshirt freshman, against Louisiana Tech in 1998.

"I was in the mix right away," he said. "That made it easier."

So did traveling with the team. He has made all of the road trips.

He is a survivor, one of only seven players who walked on in 1997 still on the team. "They talk about the walk-on program, but it's hard to be around here for five years," he said. "I kind of went into it blind; I'll do it. Man, five years seemed like an eternity when I was a freshman."

Woodward and the other walk-ons remain the foundation of the program, contributing in whatever way they can without complaint, and often in relative anonymity.

They are not anonymous to friends and family, however, far from it.

Woodward learned that early on. If he learned nothing else, that would be enough. ■



Walk-on defensive back Wes Woodward is earning his fourth letter.

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New Perspective

*Trick play call, win over Oklahoma
change outsiders' image of Solich*



**Terry
DOUGLASS**

IN THE DAYS SINCE MAKING "The Call" on Oct. 27 against Oklahoma, it seems that Nebraska Coach Frank Solich has undergone an image makeover, at least in the eyes of the national media.

Usually pegged as an ultra-conservative play-caller — especially in big-game situations — Solich was suddenly portrayed as something of a riverboat gambler, after the dandy trick play he pulled off against Oklahoma's Bob Stoops and the rest of his genius-boy coaching staff.

Solich's call for a reverse-pass from reserve split end Mike Stuntz to quarterback Eric Crouch went for a 63-yard touchdown, clinched a 20-10 win over the previously unbeaten Sooners and possibly changed the way outsiders view Solich forever.

Solich is more than likely the very same guy that he was a month ago, but the successful departure from his normal routine in the national spotlight probably made everyone who thought they had him figured out take a second look. As those in the public eye know, your public image isn't always who you really are as much as it is who people say you are. And the media colors much of that perception.

Solich admitted that the reverse pass wasn't an easy call for him to make. Give him the ball and the lead in the fourth quarter, and Solich admittedly likes to play it safe, counting on his defense to win games.

"It was difficult to some degree," Solich said. "At that point, we were up by three, and the tendency is that you've got to have ball control. But to be very honest with you, against a defensive team like Oklahoma has, if you don't take a few chances, if you don't make a few calls along those lines, you're not going to move the ball at all.

"Those kinds of things help your running game to a degree, even if you don't complete them. I think you've got to be willing to run them. Sometimes, they make you look pretty good. Sometimes, they make you look pretty bad."

Solich looked brilliant after the reverse pass but steered away from pointing out his own play-calling successes.

Instead, Solich commented on a call he wished he could've taken back. With a second-and-goal at the OU 2-yard line, Solich went with a naked bootleg to Crouch, who was dropped for a loss, and the Huskers had to settle for a field goal.

It seems that Solich is often his own toughest critic, which is saying something in a state where 90 percent of the population is qualified to coach a top-10 college football program (just ask them).

When it comes to serving as his own offensive coordinator, Solich will probably always be compared to coaching great Tom Osborne. In Solich's opinion, that will always be a difficult comparison for him to win.

"Tom was really the mastermind of offensive football,"

Solich said. "He's a great offensive coach and a great coach in general, but offensively, he was able to devise game plans and call a game like no one I've been around or seen."

While the now-famous "flash pass" helped change his image, the victory over Oklahoma also helped Solich shed — at least temporarily — any notion that he wasn't capable of winning in big games.

Winning the 1999 Big 12 Championship game and the 2000 Fiesta Bowl were big, but even Solich had to admit that beating the Sooners was probably the topper so far.

"Any time you play a team that is ranked No. 1, any time you play a team like Oklahoma that is extremely well-coached and has great athletes, certainly that's got to be awfully meaningful to you," Solich said. "So if you're pressing me for that, I guess, yes, it's as big as it gets along those lines for our program."

If Solich's words weren't convincing enough, the tears of joy in the eyes of his wife, Pam, as she watched the postgame news conference gave it away. It truly was a huge win for Solich, who despite entering this season tied for the fourth-best 3-year coaching start in NCAA Division I-A history, has taken his share of criticism for the Huskers not winning a national title since Osborne's final year as a head coach in 1997.

Knocking off Oklahoma didn't add anything to Nebraska's trophy case, but nevertheless, many figured it was a win Solich needed to show that he was making progress as a coach. As for what people outside the program think, it seems Solich could really care less.

"I don't know what my reputation is like out there," Solich said. "The only thing I know is that I don't look at it from that angle."

Several Husker players said they found it difficult to believe that the one win over Oklahoma will be considered a defining moment in Solich's career.

"I think you're going to find that he's going to have a lot more big wins," Nebraska senior tackle Dave Volk said. "He's going to win a lot of games. He's an excellent coach. His players love him, he loves his players. It's a family relationship. He would just as soon go out there and play for any of us as much as we would for him."

Solich was an All-Big Eight fullback for Nebraska under Bob Devaney in 1965. Apparently, some competitive fire that earned him the nickname "Fearless Frankie" during his playing days was revealed once again in the locker room following the big win.

"He was just like the rest of us," Volk said. "He's got a lot of football player left in him. He does a pretty good job of keeping it in check with you guys (the media), but he's pretty emotional."

Perhaps, it's another side of the "new" Solich yet to be revealed? ■



**Coach Frank Solich
has a 25-1 record at
Memorial Stadium.**

Terry Douglass is the sports editor of the *Grand Island Independent*. He can be reached at tdbbdouglass@netzero.net.

Priceless Highlight

Crouch's catch and run against Sooners better than any other promotion



Curt McKEEVER

UPON FURTHER REVIEW, the call is over-ruled.

No, we're not talking about some NFL referee who's just spent 90 seconds staring into an instant-replay monitor. This reference is for the almost-weekly rises and falls of Heisman Trophy hopefuls.

When the 2001 college football season began, a lot of the experts were touting Texas quarterback Chris Simms as the one most likely to be walking away from the

Downtown Athletic Club of New York City with the most coveted piece of hardware a Division I-A player could own.

Simms' chances all but ended, though, when the Longhorns lost to Oklahoma 14-3 in early October. More precisely, they pretty much vanished on one play deep in Texas territory in the final two minutes, when OU linebacker Roy Williams stripped the ball away from the junior to cause an interception that was returned for a touchdown.

Never mind that Simms followed up the poor showing by throwing 12 TD passes and just one interception over the next three weeks. Many of the Heisman voters didn't see him in those games. Chances are, most of them were tuned in to the ABC national telecast from the Cotton Bowl.

And so it was, three weeks later, Oklahoma was ready to bring another Heisman front-runner — Nebraska quarterback Eric Crouch — down to size.

Leading 13-10, the Cornhuskers took possession of the ball following a punt at its 3-yard line. But instead of the Sooners' vaunted defense delivering the blow, it was Crouch who came through with the knockout.

His 19-yard run on second-and-9 was called "the game's biggest play" by Coach Frank Solich.

Maybe so, but it was five plays later that Crouch hauled in a double-reverse pass from Mike Stuntz for a 63-yard TD that gave the Huskers a 20-10 lead.

The play of the day in the game of the day also became a dirt-cheap Heisman promotional. Forget about the fan-made placards that read: "Crouch: the Right Option." No sports information/marketing office could have concocted a plan that would have brought Crouch more voter attention than the priceless ESPN highlight time his catch and run was given.

As Crouch answered questions about his exploits as a receiver, his best answer had been delivered by how he had responded to the nation's best defense.

Although his final numbers were less than overwhelming — 21 yards rushing on 13 carries and 102 yards passing on 10-for-18 accuracy — Crouch rubber-stamped his Heisman credentials by doing what no other quarterback has done in the previous 20 games against the Sooners. He beat them.

"Sometimes people just look at that award as strictly statistics, and I don't think that should be it," said OU Coach

Bob Stoops. "I felt Josh Heupel showed that last year, though he didn't win it. His statistics maybe weren't quite what Chris Weinke's were, but I believe people looked at his effect on our football team. That was fair. It's more than just statistics, it's what a guy does for your team in helping you win."

Now, if Crouch is to become Nebraska's third Heisman winner, the Huskers will probably have to go unbeaten during the regular season. Crouch doesn't have the gaudy stats that, alone, get him an invitation to the awards presentation.

He's not Clemson's Woody Dantzler, or Florida's Rex Grossman. Therefore, to Heisman voters who look mainly at stats, he's not a threat to win the award.

But if what's on the scoreboard is what's most important, Crouch just might have a shot.

After the weekend of Oct. 27, Foster was listed atop an ESPN experts' poll ranking Heisman contenders. He was followed by Dorsey, Crouch, Grossman and North Carolina defensive end Julius Peppers.

There were nine "voters," and if their tallies are an indication, the Heisman is down to a three-player race. Foster received 38 points in the poll, Dorsey 35 and Crouch 29. Grossman had just eight.

Foster led the poll despite the fact UCLA lost at Stanford that weekend.

Dorsey had less than 200 yards passing against West Virginia that week, but he also equaled the Miami career record for TD passes of 48 set by Steve Walsh and Vinny Testaverde. Incidentally, both of those guys led the Hurricanes to national titles.

Crouch was the only senior among the ESPN top five, and that can't hurt his chances. Grossman, however, probably will be penalized by the fact he's just a sophomore.

And what about Peppers? Should a defensive player really be considered for the Heisman.

"I think it would be great, as long as they deserve it and have some stats to back it up — stats meaning winning teams, great defenses, big plays in big games," said Stoops, himself an all-Big Ten defender for Iowa.

North Carolina's 0-3 start still hurts Peppers.

"I think winning and winning a lot, makes a difference," Stoops said. "Those players usually are on those kind of teams that make a difference in winning."

"Intangibles? It's how how do they play, what are the big plays they've made that have affected games? And I do believe that you focus more on big games than you do in running up statistics in games that are out of hand."

Nebraska has a contest against Kansas State this week, is at Colorado the day after Thanksgiving and possibly has a rematch against Oklahoma in the Big 12 championship game. Using Stoops' rationalization, the Heisman would seem to be very much within reach for Crouch. ■



Eric Crouch had a key 19-yard run before his touchdown catch.

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.

Vedral Express

**Senior linebacker
last of 3 brothers
to play football
at Nebraska**

The trip is about 300 miles, almost all of it on two-lane highways through small towns in Nebraska, connected by wide-open spaces. Mark Vedral has made the drive countless times.

From Lincoln, he heads west on Interstate 80 to Aurora, then north on Highway 14 through Central City, west on 92 to St. Paul and north again on 281, through Greeley, Bartlett and O'Neill.

At Spencer, he jogs west on Highway 11. When he gets to Butte, he's almost home. He crosses into South Dakota and drives through Bonesteel and Burke before finally arriving in Gregory.

"It's not too bad of a drive," said Vedral, Nebraska's senior weakside linebacker.

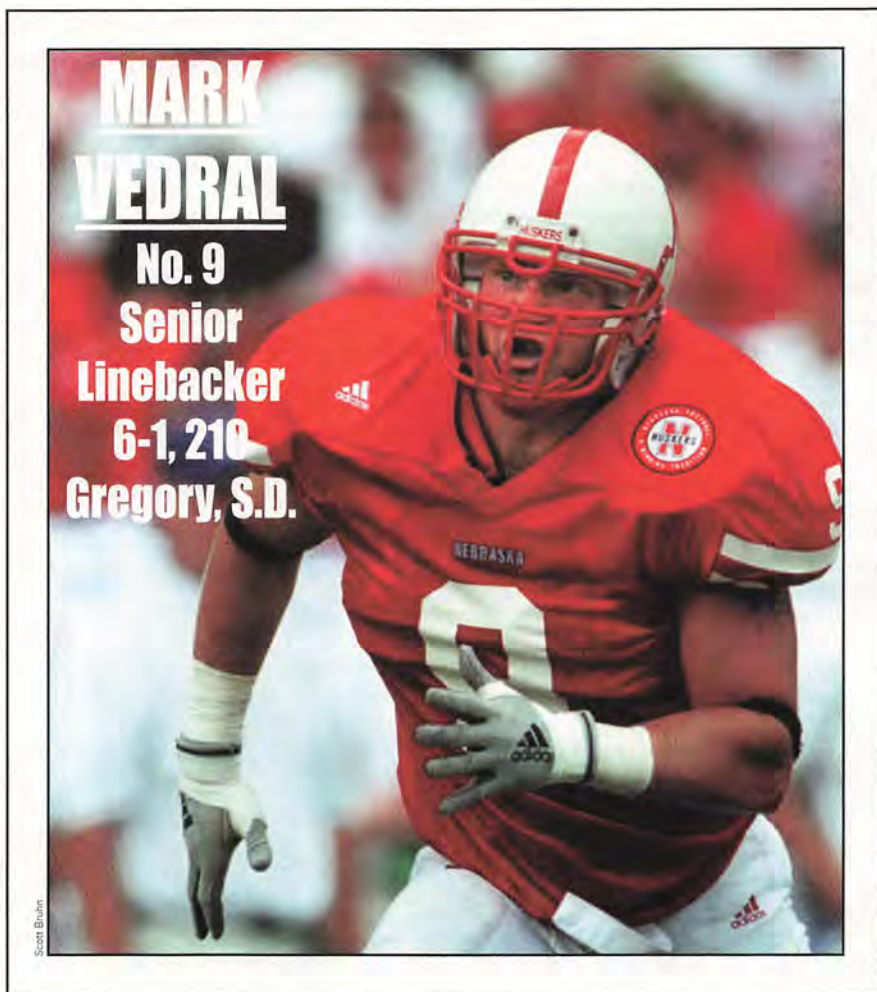
Gregory is located a little south and east of Winner, S.D. It has a population of about 2,000, and a reputation for producing some pretty good high school football teams, according to Vedral.

His senior season, Gregory High was state runner-up, with an 11-1 record, and he was player of the year.

"They love their football there, and the football program has had great success," he said. "Football is really important to people in the area. It's similar to Lincoln, just on a smaller scale."

Gregory has shared three of its own with Nebraska, beginning with Mark's brother Mike, who walked on in 1988 and played tight end on the freshman-junior varsity team, backing up John Parrella.

When Mike was a Cornhusker senior in 1992, brother Jon walked on, and in 1997, the year after Jon, a



wingback, completed his eligibility, Mark arrived — as a scholarship recruit.

By the time he got to Nebraska, Mark was as familiar with the program as a newcomer could be, having attended his first game at Memorial Stadium to watch Mike play. He saw Mike play a couple of times, and predictably, he was in awe, not only of his brother but also the experience.

"I was like, 'Wow,' you know? Mike was my hero. He came from a small school in South Dakota and now he's playing for the Huskers," Mark said. "It was a big deal to me. It was really cool."

"To come to this stadium when you're that little makes quite an impression on you, seeing all the

fans, how loud it gets and how much they support football down here.

"That was imprinted on me at a young age, how special it is."

Mark was equally proud of his brother Jon, and the imprint was intensified during Jon's Cornhusker career. Mark attended some of Jon's games, too, and by then he was interested in football.

He didn't develop a passion for football until he got to high school. "I started to grow a little bit. I got a little bit taller and started to gain some weight," he said. "That's when I started having some success. And that's when I knew football was the sport for me, or the sport I was best at."

"I knew if I wanted to play college athletics, football would have to be

the sport."

He also knew that given the opportunity, he would follow his brothers to Nebraska.

Iowa and Minnesota took an interest in him, as did South Dakota and South Dakota State. But "this is where I wanted to go, just because of the ties I had and because of the success of the program, the experiences my brothers told me about, the great friendships they made," he said.

His parents, Dennis and Dianne, never pushed him or his brothers or sisters, Tracie and Katie, into anything, whether it was athletics, band or chorus. "They just supported us," he said. "They said, 'If you're going to do something, you're going to do it to the best of your ability.'"

"That's just something they instilled in us. You're going to work hard. That's the way we were brought up. If we had a job to do, we didn't stop until it was finished."

Naturally, his parents have become Cornhusker fans, and they've made the drive from Gregory to Lincoln many more times than he has during the past 14 years.

His brothers and sisters also are Nebraska fans, of course, as are his nieces and nephews. Tracie lives in Yankton, S.D., and has two boys and a girl. Mike lives in Wahoo and has two boys. Jon is married and lives in Dallas. Katie still lives at home. She's a high school sophomore.

Mike is a pharmaceutical salesman. Jon is a personal trainer and operates a hunting lodge in South Dakota. They attend Nebraska games whenever they can, and offer advice. "Mike always tells me to keep my head up so I don't hurt my neck," said Mark, who was bothered by stingers earlier this season.

The Nebraska football team has had at least one Vedral every year since 1988, but that will change next season. Those years "have been pretty special for my parents," Mark said.

Though they would have to wait a few years, they could be making the 300-mile drive to watch another Vedral play football for the Cornhuskers at some point in the future.

Mike's boys are ages 1 and 3, "so we'll have to wait and see," said Mark.

"Maybe they'll be good football players when they get older." ■

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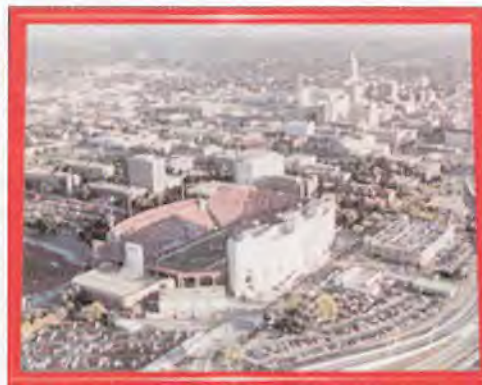
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Two years apart in high school, Gibson, Slechta end up in same senior class at NU

By Mike Babcock

John Gibson was a senior on the Papillion-LaVista High School football team in the fall of 1995. Jeremy Slechta was his sophomore teammate. But they'll both be among 23 Nebraska seniors being honored before the final game at Memorial Stadium this season against Kansas State

One of those 23, Jason Lohr, won't

J.P. Wichmann (95), RRE, Shawnee, Kan.
Jeremy Slechta (56), DT, LaVista, Neb.

Back row (from left):

Erwin Swiney (16), RCB, Lincoln, Neb.
Carl Scholting (35), FS, Springfield, Neb.
Tim Demerath (32), ROV, Plainview, Neb.
Keyuo Craver (3), LCB, Harleton, Texas
John Gibson (8), WB, Papillion, Neb.
Eric Crouch (7), QB, Omaha, Neb.
Mic Boettner (29), ROV, Omaha, Neb.
Dion Booker (14), FS, Oceanside, Calif.

Not pictured (inset)

Jason Lohr (70), NT, Tulsa, Okla.

Front row (from left):

Nick Gragert (49), FB, Columbus, Neb.
Dave Volk (58), OT, Battle Creek, Neb.
Jon Rutherford (66), OG, Midwest City, Okla.
Mark Vedral (9), WLB, Gregory, S.D.
Matt Ickes (24), RCB, Page, Neb.
Casey Nelson (85), DT, Newman Grove, Neb.

Middle row (from left):

Steve Altstadt (64), OG, Fort Calhoun, Neb.
Kyle Kollmorgen (75), OT, Lincoln, Neb.
Tracey Wistrom (87), TE, Webb City, Mo.
Wes Woodward (20), RCB, Omaha, Neb.
Jeff Hemje (18), RCB, Grand Island, Neb.
Jamie Burrow (48), MLB, Ames, Iowa



Scott Bruhn

be a uniform, however, and there's a chance he could return next season, if he is successful in petitioning the NCAA for additional eligibility. Lohr, who hasn't redshirted, suffered a season-ending knee injury in the Cornhuskers' third game against Notre Dame.

Even though he played in more than the maximum percentage of the season allowed in such matters by the NCAA — the Big 12 playoff wouldn't count — "they're saying there's a good possibility he will" get an additional season, said Slechta. "I'm hoping he will, for his sake."

Casey Nelson, another senior defensive tackle who walked on, also will petition for an additional season of eligibility after missing two full seasons because of a shoulder injury suffered in his first spring. His chances of returning appear to be at least as good as Lohr's. But nothing is certain.

Gibson knows the uncertainty such an eligibility petition entails, having gone through the process following last season. Because of a shoulder injury when he redshirted in 1996 and a knee injury the week after the first game in 1997, the NCAA granted him a sixth season of eligibility.

That's how he and Slechta can be seniors now after being two years apart in high school.

Gibson was introduced with the Cornhusker seniors a year ago, before the Colorado game, and "it was a little difficult," he said. "But this year I'll know for sure I won't be able to come back."

The petition process couldn't begin until after the Alamo Bowl game, so "at that point I wasn't sure," he said. "It wasn't even talked about, so as far as I knew, that was the end."

If it had been, he would have finished his career on a high note. He caught two passes in Nebraska's dramatic drive to Josh Brown's winning field goal against Colorado. "That was probably the most fun game I've ever played in my life just being in the mix, the atmosphere," said Gibson.

"I had that game. And I had the opportunity to come back."

Slechta would like to have such an opportunity. "I wish I didn't have to go," he said. "It's kind of like they're going to have to kick me out of here because I'm not really wanting to leave."

If he had redshirted his first sea-

son, as all but two others in his scholarship recruiting class did, his Cornhusker career wouldn't be winding down yet. And when Nebraska opened against Louisiana Tech in 1998, it appeared he probably would be a redshirt, even though he was suited up.

Since he and Lohr both were defensive tackles, the plan was to play one and redshirt the other.

Lohr emerged in pre-season practice as the one who would definitely play.

"Jason really seemed to be better prepared than I was," Slechta said. "He was bigger and stronger than I was, so he was able to hold his own better than I would have been able to

do."

Slechta figured he would suit up for home games, but play only in an emergency. Such an emergency occurred in the Louisiana Tech game. Senior defensive tackle Jason Wiltz was injured.

A week later, Slechta and Lohr both played against Alabama-Birmingham.

Slechta was fortunate that the emergency didn't arise until later in the season. But "I've always tried to do everything I can from a team aspect," he said. "There was a part of me that kind of said I know that if I redshirt, I'm going to be able to lift more weights and get bigger, better prepare myself."



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He would have accepted a redshirt because he understood the value of a year's maturity.

"But they needed me to play, so I stepped in and did what I could," he said.

Though he avoided the scout-team duty that most redshirts must endure, Slechta had to prove himself to older players, and to his position coach, then-defensive coordinator Charlie McBride.

"I think the most intimidating part about him was the stories you heard before you got here, what he was going to be like," said Slechta. "That was definitely intimidating."

McBride could be unpredictable. No one disputed that. "When you did something wrong, he'd let you know, and it was a little bit scary at times," Slechta said. "But he wasn't as intimidating once you got to know him a little bit. I really enjoyed him. I thought he was just an excellent coach."

Loran Kaiser, a sophomore at the time, helped him adjust, not only to football but also to all aspects of campus life. If Slechta had a question, he knew he could go to Kaiser for the

answer.

"You felt comfortable asking him anything," said Slechta.

Damien Peter, a student assistant, also helped. Peter, the brother of Christian and Jason Peter, nicknamed Slechta "Pencil" because he weighed barely 250 pounds when he arrived.

Slechta's scholarship recruiting class, Frank Solich's first, was solid. Only one of the 21 athletes in it didn't stay — Shawn McGann, a wingback from Granger, Ind. Mike Demps played until injuries wouldn't allow him to continue. And Randy Stella missed this season because of a suspension.

Everyone else is still on the team, and if Lohr were to be granted another season of eligibility, they would all be back in 2002 — except for Slechta and cornerback Keyuo Craver.

In contrast, the members of Gibson's recruiting class all are gone, with Ralph Brown, Mike Brown and Steve Warren having completed their collegiate eligibility two years ago.

J.R. Edwards also played as a true freshman in 1996, before transferring away.

The attrition was much greater in

Gibson's class, which included DeAngelo Evans, George Guidry, Justin Ferrell, David Webber, Khari Reynolds and Luis Almanzar, among others.

Things don't work out, for various reasons. But "usually, a freshman class sticks together. You kind of get a bond through that," said Gibson, who developed immediate friendships in his class.

Because he is 24-years-old, "I get some jokes every now and then about being the oldest guy on the team, but nothing bad," Gibson said. "I've seen a lot of things in my stay. There were a lot of things I wanted to do when I came to college, and I've been able to do them."

Getting the sixth year helped in that.

When he arrived at Nebraska in the fall of 1996, Tom Osborne was a season away from deciding to step aside as coach, and two season's worth of games away from announcing the decision.

"It seems like forever ago," said Gibson.

Slechta was a junior at Papillion-LaVista High. ■

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Nebraska I-back Dahrran Diedrick looks for an opening in the Kansas defense. Diedrick rushed for 136 yards to pass the 1,000-yard mark for the season.

Husker Player of the Game



Chris Kelsay

Kelsay Spoils Special Play

Early in the fourth quarter, Kansas tried to run its version of Nebraska's "black 41 flash reverse pass," the one from Mike Stuntz to Eric Crouch that produced a 63-yard touchdown against Oklahoma.

But the Jayhawks couldn't account for Chris Kelsay.

The junior rush end broke through and pulled Byron Gasaway down for an 11-yard loss before the Kansas flanker could even think about passing the ball to his quarterback. Kelsay found himself in no-man's land, after from his assignment. So he went after Gasaway with a vengeance.

By then, Kelsay's No. 57 jersey was a familiar sight in the Jayhawks' backfield.

Five of his team-high seven tackles were for losses totaling 21 yards.

He and the Blackshirts didn't show signs of an emotional let-down in the aftermath of the previous week's 20-10 victory against Oklahoma. But then, he didn't think there would be.

"Not in my mind," he said. "A lot of outsiders probably thought that."

The focus was there throughout the week's practices, he said. "We all step foot on the practice field every day to get better. We weren't overconfident or cocky, by any means." ■

Just Li

Nebraska's 51-7 romp adds to woes of KU coach

**By Mike
Babcock
Photos by
Scott Bruhn**

A group of sports writers waited for an elevator to the press box some 45 minutes after Nebraska's 51-7 victory against Kansas when Terry Allen approached, with his two young daughters on either side. The Jayhawks coach stopped and suggested that maybe he should go another way.

One of the writers said there could be a moratorium on questions, so Allen and his daughters rode the elevator to the third level at Memorial Stadium and got off to do an interview.

The brief elevator ride was uncomfortably silent, understandably so.

By all accounts, Allen is a good person, well liked by reporters with whom he deals. But if the speculation was correct, the interview he was about to do could well have been his last as the head coach at Kansas. By the time you read this, in fact, Allen might have been relieved of his duties.

His firing was imminent, according to the Lawrence Journal World.

Allen's job status was of little concern to the thousands of Nebraska fans who made the trip to Lawrence to watch the Cornhuskers win for a



10th consecutive time, of course.

That meant there were probably more among the sellout crowd of 50,750 who didn't care than did. Press box estimates put the number of Nebraska fans as high as 30,000, or about 60 percent.

Before the game, some of the Cornhuskers were joking about the

ike Home



Backup I-back Thunder Collins breaks loose for a 21-yard touchdown run in the second quarter. The score came one play after a 50-yard punt return by Keyuo Craver and gave the Huskers a 17-0 lead.

showed no signs of a letdown. "A lot of people were curious," rush end Chris Kelsay said.

"But Kansas expected to get our best shot, and they got it."

Except, perhaps, late in the fourth quarter when the Jayhawks managed a touchdown. That was "really disappointing," said Kelsay. "It leaves a bitter taste in our mouth."

That striving for the perfection of a shutout, which it has yet to get, has characterized the Cornhuskers' defense this season, and it was no different against an out-manned Kansas team that spent the first three quarters doing little more than sending its defense back on the field.

The Jayhawks had a net of minus-12 yards rushing and 6 total yards in the first half. And they didn't cross mid-field until nearly six minutes into the second half, when they reached the Nebraska 49-yard line, only to run three plays and be forced to punt on fourth-down-and-11 at the 50.

Kansas freshman Chris Tyrrell punted nine times — 10 if you count one that was deflected by Ben Zajicek — and averaged a very good 43.9 yards per punt. But the Cornhuskers had two big returns, a 50-yarder by Keyuo Craver to set up the second of three Josh Brown field goals on the final play of the first half and a 71-yarder for a touchdown by Ben Cornelsen early in the fourth quarter.

Nebraska Coach Frank Solich was pleased with the play of the special teams and the defense. However, "our offense was not as consistent as I would have liked," he said.

Even so, "at times we were able to get it going," he said.

Considering they went into the game leading the nation in rushing

red cast to Memorial Stadium, wondering if it were a home game. "That's good for us," said I-back Dahrran Diedrick.

Nebraska fans, who filled the stadium with chants of "Husker . . . power" during the third quarter, made enough noise at times to disrupt the Kansas offense, according to

Diedrick.

He and his teammates were obviously pleased by the support.

The biggest disruption of the Jayhawks' attack was caused by Nebraska's defense, however. Despite the emotion expended the week before in a 20-10 victory against Oklahoma, the Cornhuskers

and Kansas went in ranked 109th nationally in rushing defense, the Cornhuskers probably weren't as successful running the ball as they might have been. They finished with 284 yards rushing, slightly below their average.

But Diedrick was effective, gaining 136 yards on 21 carries to go over 1,000 for the season. The junior from Scarborough, Ontario, Canada now has rushed for 1,097 yards. Reaching 1,000 with at least two, and probably three, games to play before a bowl "means a lot to me," he said.

Diedrick also had two of Nebraska's five rushing touchdowns, on runs of 10 and 38 yards.

The Jayhawks' beleaguered defense limited Eric Crouch to 49 yards rushing and one touchdown, but he completed 14-of-24 passes for 164 yards. Wilson Thomas had six receptions for 64 yards.

The 24 passes were the second most ever by Crouch, whose single-game high was 27 against Oklahoma last season. "I'm not frustrated at all," he said. "Teams are going to come out and give us their best shot, and Kansas did that today. But we know we can do some things better."

The Cornhuskers played good but not great, he said.

Kansas did a lot of shifting defensively, said Diedrick. "They took a lot of risks." But Nebraska made some offensive adjustments at halftime and "things started working a lot better."

The Cornhuskers went ahead 44-0 on Diedrick's second touchdown with 9:47 remaining in the game before Kansas finally mounted a scoring drive. The Jayhawks moved 80 yards in 10 plays, with second-string quarterback Zach Dyer passing 4 yards to tight end Adrian Jones for the touchdown.

By then, a majority of Jayhawk fans had left the stadium. In fact, they began leaving at halftime. By the middle of the third quarter, the middle section of the east stands was nearly half-empty, with only the Kansas band and a student section providing a semblance of a home crowd.

That middle section was framed on either side by masses of red.

"There is no question they are the



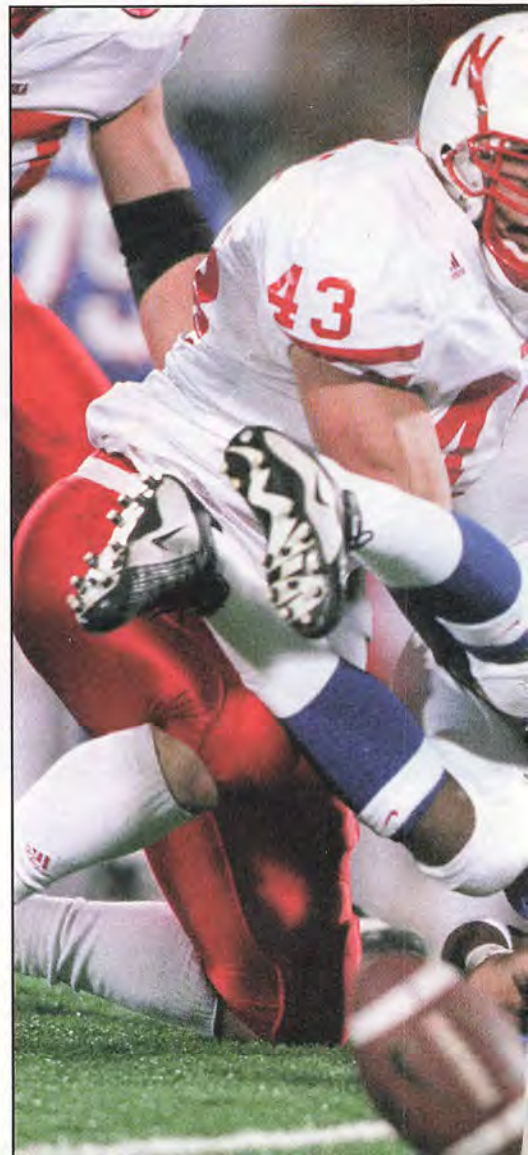
The passing game produced 164 of Nebraska's 448 total yards. Eric Crouch's favorite receiver was split end Wilson Thomas (above), who had 6 catches for 65 yards. The Huskers' leading receiver, Thomas now has 34 receptions for 507 yards. Kansas, meanwhile, could net just 79 yards through the air. Starting quarterback Mario Kinsey completed just 3-of-9 for 12 yards and was intercepted twice. He was sacked for a 14-yard loss (right) by Husker linebacker Scott Shanle (43) in the second quarter. The football came loose, but officials ruled Kinsey was down before fumbling.

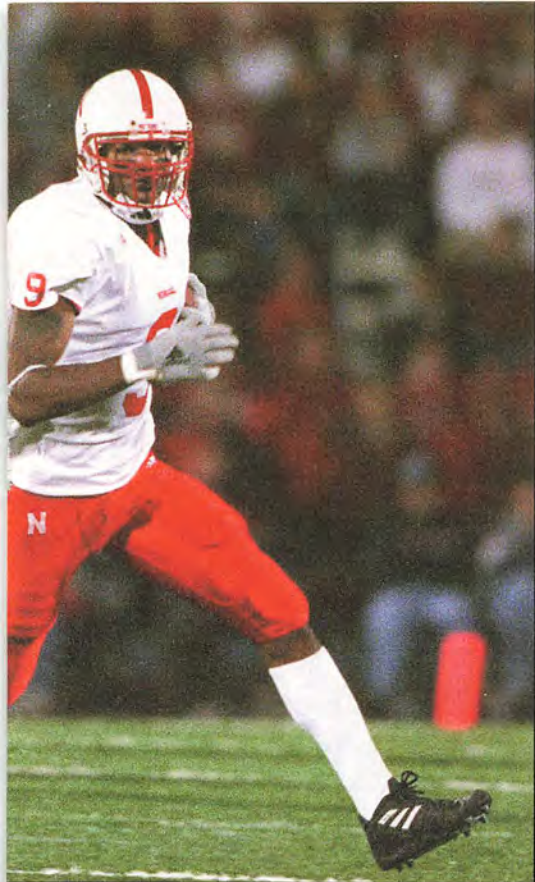
best fans," Solich said. "Before the game, we were thinking that if it ended in a tie we would choose the north end zone because of the sea of red that was there."

There was virtually no blue in the eight sections that comprise the stadium's closed-in north end.

Solich's hypothetical tie stretched the imagination to the breaking point. Some things are possible and some aren't. And that Kansas might play Nebraska to a four-quarter tie was the latter.

That's why Allen needed the moratorium on questions during the elevator ride afterward. The Cornhuskers buried any hope he might have had of retaining his job a little longer. ■





4TH & 1 NCHES

Notes And Quotes From The Kansas Game

IT'S A RUSH

Junior I-back Dahrran Diedrick became the 24th Cornhusker to rush for 1,000 yards in a season. He has rushed for 100 or more yards in four of the last five games.

He also scored two touchdowns to increase his season's total to 12.

HEISMAN WATCH

Quarterback Eric Crouch's numbers weren't particularly impressive, for him. But the senior from Omaha improved his career record to 34-5 as a starter, becoming just the 10th quarterback in NCAA Division I-A to direct 34 victories as a starter.

He went into the game tied with Tommie Frazier for the school record.

EVERYONE GETS INTO THE ACT

Crouch completed 14-of-24 passes for 164 yards, with no interceptions. His 14 completions were spread among six receivers, with split end Wilson Thomas catching six for 65 yards.

Thomas also caught six passes the previous week against Oklahoma. The junior from Omaha has now caught at least one pass in seven consecutive games and in all but one game this season.

Senior tight end Tracey Wistrom saw his streak of at least one catch in the last 12 games come to an end. Back-up tight ends Kyle Ringenberg and Jon Bowling each caught two passes, however.

TEN

Nebraska is 10-0 for only the 11th time in school history, and the first under Coach Frank Solich. Seven Tom Osborne-coached teams opened with 10 consecutive victories, including all three of his national championship teams. Two Bob Devaney-coached teams won their first 10 games, including the 1971 national championship team. And one Bummy Booth-coached team won its first 10 games.

The Cornhuskers have won at least 10 games for a third consecutive season.

The victory was Nebraska's 12th in a row, dating to last season's 29-28 loss at Kansas State.

UNMATCHED

Frank Solich now has 41 victories in his four seasons as Nebraska's head coach, something none of his predecessors have accomplished and fourth all-time among NCAA Division I-A coaches.

SOLD OUT

The game was a sellout, the first at Kansas since the Kansas State game in 1992. The crowd of 50,750 was the fourth largest in Memorial Stadium history, behind Kansas State games in 1981 (51,600), 1973 (51,574) and 1971 (51,151). The Nebraska game in 1972 (50,523) is fifth on the list.

Memorial Stadium's official capacity is 50,250, with 800 temporary seats added in the end zones for the Nebraska game. Kansas Athletic Director Dr. Al Bohl encouraged Jayhawk fans to wear blue.

"We need to see as much blue in Memorial Stadium as possible," he said.

The color scheme of the crowd clearly appeared to be more than 50 percent red. Press box estimates of the number of Cornhusker fans at the game were as high as 30,000.

Despite the Jayhawks' problems, home attendance has increased by an average of more than 10,000 per game this season.

NON-COMPETITIVE

The Nebraska-Kansas series is the third longest in Division I-A of the NCAA, 108 games. Only Kansas-Missouri and Minnesota-Wisconsin series have been longer, 110 games.

Nebraska-Kansas is the longest continuous I-A series, 96 games.

The victory was the Cornhuskers' 33rd in a row against Kansas, dating to 1968. Nebraska has dominated the series, with an all-time record of 84-21-3.

NO DAVIES

Starting fullback Judd Davies wasn't included on the 70-player travel roster. The sophomore from Omaha has been sidelined by an ankle sprain, suffered early in the Texas Tech game.

Davies did not practice during the week leading up to the game.

Senior Nick Gragert, also a fullback, replaced Davies on the travel roster. Redshirted freshman Steve Kriewald started in place of Davies. ■

2001 Schedule

(Team's current record)

1 Aug. 25	TCU (4-4), W 21-7	1-0
2 Sept. 1	Troy State (4-4), W 42-14	2-0
3 Sept. 8	Notre Dame (3-5), W 27-10	3-0
4 Sept. 20	Rice (6-3), W 48-3	4-0
5 Sept. 29	@ Missouri (3-5), W 36-3	5-0
6 Oct. 6	Iowa State (5-3), W 48-14	6-0
7 Oct. 13	@ Baylor (2-6), W 48-7	7-0
8 Oct. 20	Texas Tech (5-3), W 41-31	8-0
9 Oct. 27	Oklahoma (8-1), W 20-10	9-0
10 Nov. 3	@ Kansas (2-6), W 51-7	10-0
11 Nov. 10	Kansas State (4-4), 2:30 p.m., ABC	
12 Nov. 23	@ Colorado (7-2), 2:30 p.m., ABC	
Dec. 1	Big 12 Championship at Irving, Texas, 7 p.m., ABC	

Big 12 at a Glance

	North		All	
	Conf.			
Nebraska	6	0	10	0
Colorado	5	1	7	2
Iowa State	3	3	5	3
Kansas State	2	4	4	4
Missouri	2	4	3	5
Kansas	1	5	2	6
	South		All	
	Conf.			
Oklahoma	5	1	8	1
Texas	5	1	8	1
Texas A&M	4	2	7	2
Texas Tech	3	3	5	3
Baylor	0	6	2	6
Oklahoma State	0	5	2	6

Nov. 3 results

Nebraska 51, Kansas 7
 Kansas State 42, Iowa State 3
 Colorado 38, Missouri 24
 Texas 49, Baylor 10
 Texas Tech 12, Texas A&M 0
 Oklahoma 58, Tulsa 0

Nonconference opponents

Maryland 47, Troy State 14
 Tennessee 28, Notre Dame 18
 Fresno State 52, Rice 24
Oct. 30: East Carolina 37, TCU 30

Upcoming Opponents' Schedules

	Kansas State (4-4)
Sept. 8	at USC, W 10-6
Sept. 22	New Mexico State, W 64-0
Sept. 29	at Oklahoma, L 38-37
Oct. 6	Colorado, L 16-6
Oct. 13	at Texas Tech, L 38-19
Oct. 20	Texas A&M, L 31-24
Oct. 27	Kansas, W 40-6
Nov. 3	at Iowa State, W 42-3
Nov. 10	at Nebraska
Nov. 17	Louisiana Tech
Nov. 24	Missouri

	Colorado (7-2)
Aug. 26	Fresno State, L 24-22
Sept. 1	Colorado State, W 41-14
Sept. 8	San Jose State, W 51-15
Sept. 22	Kansas, W 27-16
Oct. 6	at Kansas State, W 16-6
Oct. 13	Texas A&M, W 31-21
Oct. 20	at Texas, L 41-7
Oct. 27	at Oklahoma State, W 22-19
Nov. 3	Missouri, W 38-24
Nov. 10	at Iowa State
Nov. 23	Nebraska

Game 11

Kansas State Nov. 10

Location: Manhattan, Kan.

Enrollment: 21,929

2001 record: 4-4

Coach: Bill Snyder, 13th year

Series: Nebraska leads 71-12-2

2:30 p.m. (ABC)

Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.



Wildcat to Watch

Wide receiver Aaron Lockett led the nation in punt returns last season, when he averaged 22.8 yards per return, including three touchdowns. He has yet to reach the end zone in 25 punt returns this season but has returned a kickoff 97 yards for a score.



The 5-foot-7, 165-pound senior from Tulsa, Okla., is also one of K-State's top receivers, with 16 catches for 197 yards and two touchdowns.

Quick Facts

After losing four straight games, the Wildcats have won two straight to even their record at 4-4.

The Wildcats have not allowed a touchdown over the last nine quarters. The last touchdown scored by the opposition came in the third quarter of the Texas A&M game Oct. 20, when the Aggies returned a fumble 17 yards for a TD. The last offensive touchdown allowed came earlier in that quarter when A&M's Joe scored on a 1-yard run.

The KSU defense limited Iowa State to 174 total yards in total offense and held defending Big 12 rushing champ Ennis Haywood to 6 yards in 10 carries.

On Deck

At Colorado Nov. 23

Location: Boulder, Colo.

Enrollment: 26,035

2001 record: 7-2

Coach: Gary Barnett, 3rd season

Series: Nebraska leads 32-14-2

2:30 p.m. (ABC)

Folsom Field, Boulder, Colo.



Tentative 2 Deeps

NEBRASKA OFFENSE

SE	9	Wilson Thomas**	6-6	215	Jr.
	81	Ben Cornelsen*	5-10	190	Jr.
LT	58	Dave Volk***	6-5	300	Sr.
	73	Scott Koethe*	6-5	310	Jr.
LG	77	Toni Fonoti**	6-4	340	Jr.
	74	Steve Altstadt*	6-5	295	Sr.
C	52	John Garrison**	6-4	285	Jr.
	53	Matt Shook*	6-2	300	Jr.
RG	66	Jon Rutherford***	6-3	300	Sr.
	59	Wes Cody*	6-2	295	Jr.
RT	68	Dan Waldrop*	6-5	330	So.
	66	Jon Rutherford***	6-3	300	Sr.
TE	87	Tracey Wistrom***	6-5	240	Sr.
	99	Aaron Golliday**	6-4	285	Jr.
QB	7	Eric Crouch***	6-1	200	Sr.
	10	Jammal Lord*	6-2	215	So.
FB	4	Judd Davies*	6-0	240	So.
	45	Steve Kriewald	5-10	255	Fr.
IB	30	Dahrran Diedrick**	6-0	225	Jr.
	1	Thunder Collins*	6-2	190	Jr.
WB	8	John Gibson***	6-0	195	Sr.
	89	Troy Hassebrook**	6-4	220	Jr.
PK	26	Josh Brown**	6-2	190	Jr.

NEBRASKA DEFENSE

LR	57	Chris Kelsay**	6-5	270	Jr.
	92	Justin Smith**	6-4	260	Jr.
NT	55	Jon Clanton**	6-2	280	Jr.
	59	Ryon Bingham	6-3	275	So.
DT	56	Jeremy Slechta***	6-6	285	Sr.
	85	Casey Nelson**	6-2	285	Sr.
RR	98	Demoine Adams**	6-2	235	Jr.
	95	J.P. Wichmann**	6-4	230	Sr.
SLB	43	Scott Shanley**	6-2	235	Jr.
	47	Ira Cooper	6-2	220	Fr.
MLB	48	Jamie Burrow***	6-1	245	Sr.
	38	Barrett Ruud	6-2	220	Fr.
WLB	9	Mark Vedral***	6-1	210	Sr.
	17	T.J. Hollowell*	6-0	220	So.
LCB	3	Keyuo Craver***	5-10	190	Sr.
	28	Pat Ricketts*	5-11	180	So.
FS	14	Dion Booker***	6-1	205	Sr.
or	27	Willie Amost*	6-0	185	So.
ROV	21	Phillip Bland	6-0	205	Fr.
	2	Aaron Terpening**	5-11	200	Jr.
RCB	5	DeJuan Groce**	5-10	190	Jr.
or	16	Erwin Swiney***	6-0	185	Sr.
P	19	Kyle Larson	6-0	205	So.

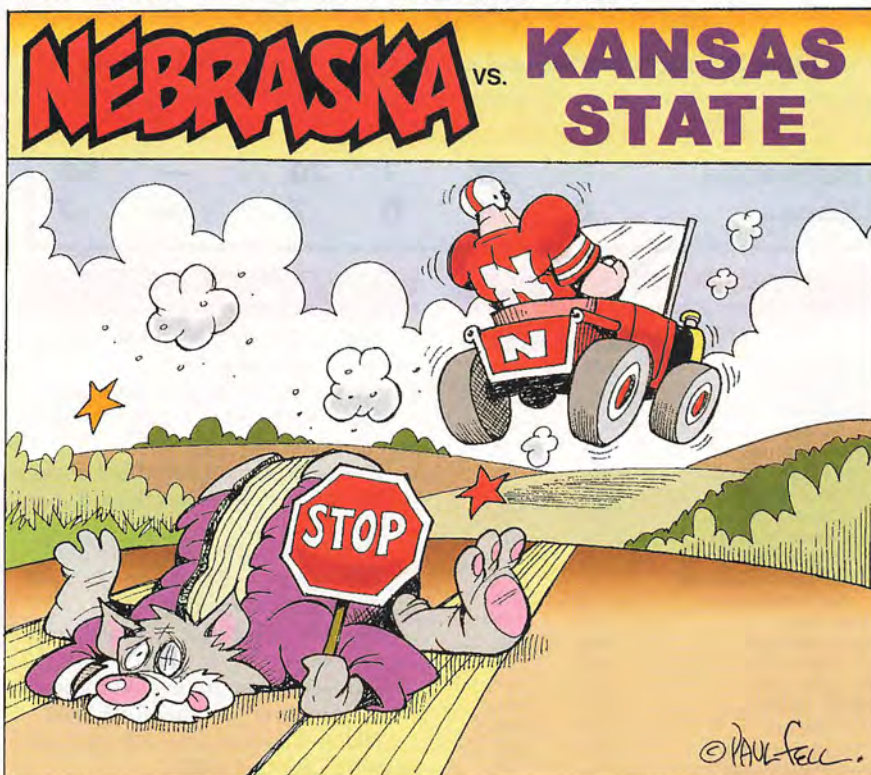
KANSAS STATE OFFENSE

WR	82	Ricky Lloyd	5-10	160	Sr.
	8	Taco Wallace	6-1	190	Jr.
LT	69	Matt Martin*	6-5	270	Sr.
	79	Jon Doty	6-8	270	Fr.
LG	53	Nick Leckey*	6-4	285	So.
	66	Jarvis Miller	6-3	280	Jr.
C	78	Steve Washington**	6-4	315	Jr.
	63	Ryan Schmucker	6-5	285	Fr.
RG	64	Andy Eby**	6-3	280	Sr.
	57	Clint Absher	6-5	282	Fr.
RT	76	Oshin Honarchian	6-5	290	Sr.
	75	Dralinn Burks	6-4	305	Jr.
TE	81	Nick Warren***	6-7	255	Sr.
	84	Brian Lamone*	6-4	235	Jr.
QB	3	Ell Roberson**	6-1	205	So.
	5	Marc Dunn	6-4	205	Jr.
RB	1	Josh Scobey*	6-0	205	Sr.
	34	Danny Morris*	5-11	200	So.
FB	25	Rock Cartwright*	5-8	242	Sr.
	33	Joe Hall*	6-2	290	Sr.
WR	22	Aaron Lockett***	5-7	165	Sr.
	9	Derrick Evans	5-11	175	So.
K	15	Joe Rheem	6-2	210	Fr.

KANSAS STATE DEFENSE

LE	90	Henry Bryant	6-1	255	Jr.
	49	Alex Carrier	6-4	245	Fr.
DT	96	Jerry Togiai*	6-4	295	Sr.
	62	Corey White	6-3	285	Jr.
NT	30	Tank Reese	5-11	280	Jr.
	92	Justin Montgomery	6-2	275	So.
RE	98	Andrew Shull*	6-5	255	So.
	94	Thomas Houchin	6-3	260	So.
LB	52	Ben Leber***	6-4	250	Sr.
	51	Andy Klocke**	6-2	220	So.
LB	56	Tony Pierce*	6-3	250	So.
	50	Warren Lott*	6-3	230	Sr.
LB	7	Josh Buhl*	6-0	200	So.
	18	Bryan Hickman	6-3	220	So.
CB	21	DeMarcus Faggins*	5-11	175	Sr.
	2	DeRon Tyler**	5-9	170	Sr.
FS	38	Jon McGraw***	6-3	200	Sr.
	12	Derrick Yates*	6-2	185	Sr.
SS	14	Milton Proctor***	6-0	207	Sr.
	13	Brandon Solt	6-3	170	Jr.
CB	4	Terrence Newman**	5-11	185	Jr.
	33	James Dunnigan	5-8	180	Jr.
P	9	Mike Ronsick**	6-2	190	Sr.

THE PAUL FELL PREDICTION



NOV. 10, 2001

CATS BECOME ROAD KILL WHEN THEY TRY TO PUT THE BRAKES ON HUSKER HOT ROD!

PICKS

KANSAS STATE AT NEBRASKA

Brian Hill Editor

After suffering from an Oklahoma hangover for three straight games, the Wildcats have won two straight and look more like the team they were projected to be. Their defense has been on a roll. But if the Huskers need additional motivation, they can look back to a disappointing 29-28 loss last year in Manhattan. **Nebraska 27, Kansas State 14**

Mike Babcock Contributing Editor

You figure the Wildcats were spending a little time preparing for Nebraska before their unexpected collapse, and a victory in this game would provide them

with some consolation for a season gone bad. Also, they probably have the talent to pull an upset. On the other hand, Kansas State has turned to mush its last couple of trips to Lincoln, when things were going much better than they are now. Considering all of that. **Nebraska 35, Kansas State 24**

Terry Douglass Grand Island Independent Sports Editor

When the season started, this looked like it might be a huge game. Guess what? For Kansas State, it still is. The Wildcats could salvage their season somewhat with a win at Lincoln. Nebraska had better be ready. **Nebraska 27, Kansas State 20**

BY THE NUMBERS

Nebraska vs. Kansas

Nov. 3, 2001 • Memorial Stadium • Lawrence, Kan.

Score By Quarters

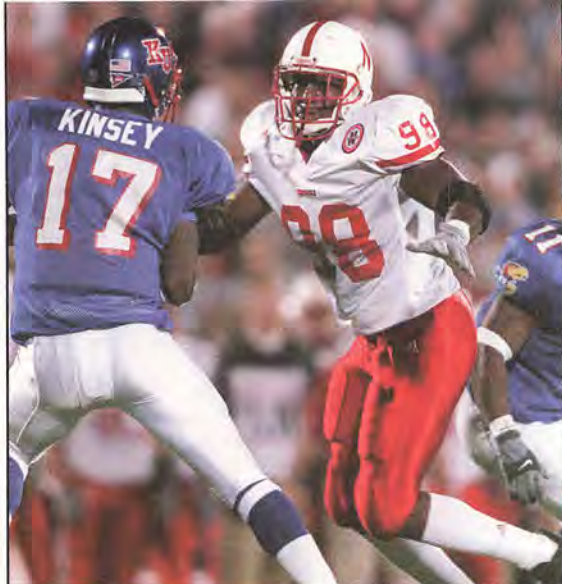
Nebraska	0	20	7	24	—	51
Kansas	0	0	0	7	—	7

Team Stats

	NU	KU
First Downs	24	11
Rushing	17	7
Passing	7	3
Penalty	0	1
Rushing Attempts	51	42
Yards Gained Rushing	304	181
Yards Lost Rushing	20	57
Net Yards Rushing	284	124
Net Yards Passing	164	79
Passes Attempted	25	17
Passes Completed	14	8
Had Intercepted	0	2
Total Plays	76	59
Total Net Yards	448	203
Avg. Gain Per Play	5.9	3.4
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-1
Penalties-Yards	3-25	3-28
Punts-Yards	5-199	10-422
Avg. Per Punt	39.8	42.2
Punt Returns-Yards	8-154	2-7
Interceptions-Yards	2-6	0-0
Fumble Returns-Yards	0-0	0-0
Kickoff Returns-Yards	2-39	6-97
Possession Time	30:18	29:42

Scoring

NU — Dahrran Diedrick 10-yard run (Josh Brown kick)
NU — Brown 32-yard field goal
NU — Thunborn Collins 21-yard run (Brown kick)
NU — Brown 43-yard field goal
NU — Eric Crouch 1-yard run (Brown kick)
NU — Brown 32-yard field goal
NU — Ben Cornelsen 71-yard punt return (Brown kick)
NU — Diedrick 38-yard run (Brown kick)
KU — Adrian Jones 4-yard pass from Zach Dyer (Johnny Beck kick)
NU — Jammal Lord 33-yard run (Sandro DeAngelis kick)
Att. — 50,750
Weather — overcast
Temp. — 63



NU rush end Demoiné Adams has his sights set on KU quarterback Mario Kinsey. Adams had one of the Huskers' two sacks.

2001 SEASON STATS

RUSHING

Name	G	Att.	Yds.	YPG	TD
Diedrick, D.	9	193	1,097	121.9	12
Crouch, E.	10	162	847	84.7	15
Collins, T.	10	77	559	55.9	5
Davis, J.	9	33	206	22.9	4
Grixby, D.	7	25	104	14.9	0
Lord, J.	7	22	93	13.3	2
Kriewald, S.	9	17	71	7.9	0
Davis, J.	10	8	61	6.1	1
Cornelsen, B.	9	2	33	3.7	0
Kastl, P.	7	8	32	4.6	0

PASSING

Name	G	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Crouch, E.	10	89-154-6	57.8	1,252	7
Lord, J.	6	5-8-1	62.5	65	0
Stuntz, M.	8	1-1-0	100.0	63	1

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds.	YPC	YPG	TD
Thomas, W.	10	34	507	14.9	50.7	3
Wistrom, T.	8	19	290	15.3	36.2	2
Collins, T.	10	14	125	8.9	12.5	0
Gibson, J.	10	13	212	16.3	21.2	1
Bowling, J.	9	4	75	18.8	8.3	1
Ringenberg, K.	6	3	49	16.3	8.2	0
Crouch, E.	10	1	63	63.0	6.3	1

FIELD GOALS

Name	G	Att.	Good	Long
Brown, J.	9	11	8	43
DeAngelis, S.	8	3	2	21

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Larson, K.	49	2,088	42.6	68

PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Groce, D.	30	391	13.0	34	0
Craver, K.	21	246	11.7	50	0
Cornelsen, B.	10	124	12.4	71	1

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Davis, J.	17	454	26.7	43	0

DEFENSE

Name	G	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	S/Yds.
Burrow, J.	10	21	43	64	11-33	0	2.5-21
Craver, K.	10	32	20	52	2-3	3-97	0
Vedral, M.	10	21	27	48	4-10	1-1	1-1
Ruud, B.	10	18	28	46	6-15	0	0.5-3
Booker, D.	10	26	17	43	2-2	1-18	0
Shanley, S.	10	22	20	42	8-36	0	3-25
Kelsay, C.	10	21	19	40	17-58	0	3-19
Siechta, J.	10	13	19	32	3-9	0	1-7

TEAM STATISTICS

	NU	OPP
Total Offensive Yards	4,538	2,588
Plays	729	683
Average Per Play	6.2	3.8
Average Per Game	453.8	258.8
Net Rushing Yards	3,158	784
Attempts	565	322
TDs Rushing	40	4
Net Passing Yards	1,380	1,804
Completions	95	158
Average Per Pass	14.5	11.4
Average Per Catch	138.0	180.4
TDs Passing	8	6
Sacks By-Yards	33-287	7-53
Fumbles-Lost	21-11	19-7
Penalties-Yards	57-553	63-494
Scoring		
1st	113	109
2nd	42	71
3rd	17	89
4th	17	0
OT	0	382
TOT	30	106

Individual Statistics

NEBRASKA

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Diedrick, D.	21	136	6.5	38	2
Crouch, E.	13	49	3.8	15	1
Lord, J.	2	42	21.0	33	1
Collins, T.	5	32	6.4	21	1
Grixby, D.	3	18	6.0	7	0
Kastl, P.	3	7	2.3	6	0
Kriewald, S.	3	4	1.3	3	0
Zajack, B.	1	-4	-4.0	0	0

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Crouch, E.	14-24-0	58.3	164	0
Team	0-1-0	00.0	0	0

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Thomas, W.	6	65	10.8	19	0
Bowling, J.	2	34	17.0	17	0
Ringenberg, K.	2	30	15.0	20	0
Collins, T.	2	14	7.0	7	0
Gibson, J.	1	18	18.0	18	0
Kriewald, S.	1	3	3.0	3	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Larson, K.	5	199	39.8	52

PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Cornelsen, B.	4	71	17.8	71	1
Craver, K.	4	63	15.8	50	0
Groce, D.	3	20	6.7	19	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Davis, J.	1	23	23.0	23	0
Hassebroek, T.	1	16	16.0	16	0

DEFENSE

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Kelsay, C.	6	1	7	5-21	0	0
Ruud, B.	4	1	5	0	0	0
Shanley, S.	4	0	4	2-18	0	1-14
Smith, J.	3	1	4	2-1	0	0
Siechta, J.	3	1	4	0	0	0
Vedral, M.	3	0	3	0	0	0
Amos, W.	3	0	3	0	0	0
Terpening, A.	3	0	3	0	0	0
Burrow, J.	2	1	3	0	0	0
Cooper, I.	2	0	2	0	0	0
Craver, K.	2	0	2	0	0	0
Pippens, J.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Booker, D.	1	1	2	1-1	0	0
Ringenberg, K.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Bland, P.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Adams, D.	1	0	1	1-11	0	1-11

Wichmann, J.P.	1	0	1	1-1	0	0
Brown, M.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Hassebroek, T.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Nelson, C.	1	0	1	1-4	0	0
Bingham, R.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Fries, G.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Brown, J.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Hollowell, T.J.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Hernie, J.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Demerath, T.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Ricketts, P.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Thomas, B.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Groce, D.	0	0	0	0	1-0	0
McPherson, L.	0	0	0	0	1-(-6)	0

KANSAS

RUSHING LEADERS

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Duncan, R.	18	73	4.6	41	0
Chiles, M.	5	36	7.2	16	0
McClendon, H.	3	21	7.0	16	0
Coke, D.	4	16	4.0	13	0
Dyer, Z.	7	9	1.3	8	0

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Kinsey, M.	3-9-2	33.3	12	0
Dyer, Z.	5-8-0	62.5	67	1

RECEIVING LEADERS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Ross, R.	3	29	9.7	21	0
Jones, A.	2	28	14.0	24	1
Scott, M.	1	12	12.0	12	0
Gasaway, B.	1	10	10.0	10	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Tyrrell, C.	9	395	43.9	55
Team	1	27	27.0	27

PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Ross, R.	2	7	3.5	8	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Fulton, T.	3	58	19.3	23	0
Gasaway, B.	3	39	13.0	20	0

DEFENSE LEADERS

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Etienne, L.	7	4	11	2-3	0	0
Letourneau, J.	4	4	8	1-1	0	0
Rogers, M.	4	4	8	0	0	0
Atkinson, A.	4	3	7	1-2	0	0
Cole, G.	6	0	6	0	0	0
Dwyer, N.	4	1	5	2-8	0	1-7
Watkins, T.	3	2	5	0	0	0

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War of Words Adds to Hype

*Quotes from
key players
add fuel to fire
for '86 game*

By Mike Babcock

Nebraska boosters in Arizona paid for an advertisement in the Lincoln newspapers the week before the Oklahoma game in 1986. The ad encouraged the Cornhuskers to beat Oklahoma and suggested how the defense could deal with Oklahoma quarterback Jamelle Holieway, and back-up Eric Mitchel.

In addition to the suggestions, the ad said: "Ask Broderick Thomas What To Do?"

It concluded by encouraging Nebraska to beat Oklahoma the way Miami had.

Coach Barry Switzer's Sooners were coming off a national championship run in 1985 and had lost only twice in two seasons, both times against Miami — 27-14 and 28-16.

The second of those losses, in the third game of the 1986 season, effectively prevented Oklahoma from repeating as national champion. But that didn't diminish the excitement surrounding what would be the first of two consecutive visits to Memorial Stadium by the Sooners. The Big Eight had revised the conference schedule, in the process requiring Oklahoma to play at Lincoln again in 1987.

As if the match-up of No. 3



OU's Jamelle Holieway (4) found NU's Broderick Thomas (89) every time he ran right. The Huskers wore all red uniforms for the Nov. 22, 1986, game.

Oklahoma and No. 5 Nebraska wasn't sufficiently interesting, key players on both sides fueled an already bright fire with words spoken to the media.

Holieway called Nebraska middle guard Danny Noonan, an All-American, just another lineman,

while Cornhusker defensive end Thomas said that Holieway wasn't Oklahoma's best quarterback. Rather, Thomas said, Mitchel was.

"I believe you can stop Jamelle," said Thomas.

In addition, the ever-quotable Thomas, a sophomore from

Great Games at Memorial Stadium

Tenth in a Series



Nebraska continues to enjoy amazing success in the friendly confines of Memorial Stadium. Entering the 2001 season, the Huskers are 81-3 at home the last 13 years and carry a streak of 239 consecutive sellouts. Since it opened in 1923, Memorial Stadium has been the site of many great games. In each issue during the 2001 season, Huskers Illustrated will feature one of those games.

Houston, said, "I believe we can shut out Oklahoma. We have the best defense in the nation, from my point of view."

The Sooners did have the best offense in the nation, based on statistics. They led the nation in rushing offense (422.8 yards), total offense (483.9 yards) and scoring offense (44.6 points).

And they were 8 1/2-point favorites against once-beaten Nebraska.

The Cornhuskers had lost at Colorado a month earlier.

Ironically, Nebraska still had a slim chance of playing for the national championship in the Orange Bowl game when the Oklahoma game day began. Miami would accept an Orange Bowl bid if Pittsburgh were to upset Penn State and if the Cornhuskers were to beat Oklahoma. As it turned out, neither happened, and Miami lost to Penn State with a national title at stake in the Fiesta Bowl game, instead.

If Dick DeVenizio had his way, the

Nebraska-Oklahoma game would help provide the impetus for the formation of an athletes union — the Revenue Producing Major College Players Association.

DeVenizio, a former Duke basketball player who had created the organization, encouraged Nebraska and Oklahoma players to delay the kickoff 30 minutes as a show of support for his group.

DeVenizio wanted Division I-A football and basketball players to be paid.

Oklahoma linebacker Brian Bosworth said he would do whatever his teammates decided. Cornhusker Coach Tom Osborne

agreed in principle with DeVenizio's position. "We're asking more and more of the players and correspondingly rewarding them less," Osborne was quoted in the Lincoln newspapers. "Hardly anyone seems concerned about the people playing the game."

That didn't mean Osborne advocated delaying the game, however.

Despite the exchange of words between players on both sides — "I'm not worried about anybody on their defensive line," said Holieway — there also was a mutual respect.

"You'll never hear me say anything bad about Nebraska," linebacker Brian Bosworth told a Lincoln

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sports writer. "If I hadn't come here, I wouldn't have minded going to Nebraska. Coach Osborne shoots straight. Their players are just like us. The program is just like ours. They've always done the things it takes to win."

On this particular day, however, the Sooners did the things it took to win, in the same frustrating way they had won 10 years earlier, when a lateral and pass followed by a pass and lateral enabled them to move from their own 16-yard line to the Nebraska 2-yard line and then score with 38 seconds left.

The Cornhuskers had taken a 17-7 lead into the fourth quarter at

"I believe we can shut out Oklahoma. We have the best defense in the nation, from my point of view."

— Broderick Thomas, before 1986 game

Memorial Stadium in 1976, only to lose 20-17. And they took a 17-7 lead into the fourth quarter this time, only to see Oklahoma come back and win 20-17 again, when Tim Lashar kicked a 31-yard field goal with 6 seconds left.

The difference-maker for Oklahoma was tight end Keith Jackson, who, early in the week, had

lamented the fact that the Sooners' nation-leading offense was based almost entirely on the run. Oklahoma hadn't even attempted a pass the previous week in beating Colorado 28-0.

Jackson predicted that against Nebraska the Sooners would throw at least five passes. In fact, Holieway threw 12, six of which were complete for 147 yards and a touchdown.

The touchdown came on a 17-yard pass play to Jackson with 1:22 remaining, tying the score at 17. The touchdown drive covered 94 yards on 11 plays, including a 35-yard pass.

At that point, it appeared the game would finish in a tie.

Oklahoma got the ball back, however, on a Nebraska punt and quickly moved down the field again, with the crucial play coming on third-down-and-12 at the Sooner 45-yard line with 18 seconds remaining. Holieway again passed to Jackson, for a 41-yard gain to the Nebraska 14 with 9 seconds left.

Lashar kicked his second field goal of the fourth quarter. Cornhusker quarterback Steve Taylor was sacked as the final seconds elapsed. And Switzer talked about "Sooner Magic" — which Nebraska had tried to counteract with a new look, wearing red pants with their red jerseys.

There was an element of luck, Switzer said. But he added, Oklahoma also had great players.

Afterward, Thomas apologized to Nebraska fans and noted that he would have two more seasons to make good on the apology. "The next time they come in here, they can expect to get punished."

Punished or not, the Sooners also would win the next year's game — hyped as the "Game of the Century II" because it matched No. 1 Nebraska and No. 2 Oklahoma — 17-7.

Thomas wouldn't make good until his senior season, when the Cornhuskers won at Norman 7-3. ■

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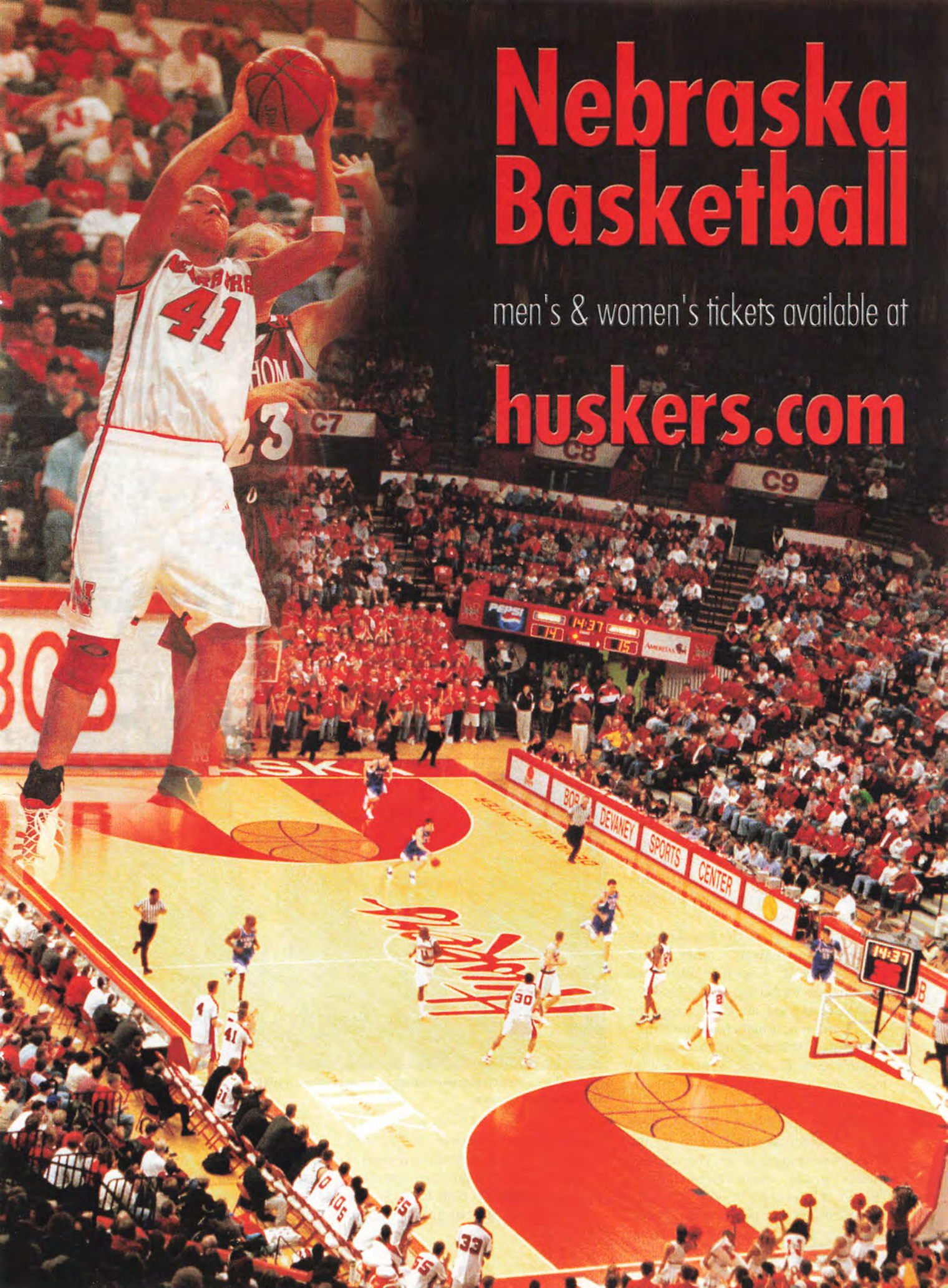
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SIDEOUT

Over the Top

*Coach looks to
setter Cepero to
take defending
champions to
another level*

By Todd Henrichs

Just playing two sports at Nebraska wasn't enough. Greichaly Cepero had to go and play the most demanding position.

As the setter on NU's title-contending volleyball team, Cepero works every day — virtually every minute — striving to live up to the tradition that the setting position holds at Nebraska.

Head coach John Cook's charge is simple. More than any other player on the court, it's Cepero's job to lead the Huskers to the top of the game.

"We're talking about winning the Big 12 and a national championship," Cook said. "What's going to make the difference is Greicha. You've got to look out there and know this is Greicha's team."

From sunny Puerto Rico, Cepero came to Nebraska in part to be the school's next great setter. The school's media guide dubs Nebraska as "Setter University," with 13 All-Americans at the position in 18 seasons. Lori Endicott went on to play in



Nebraska setter Greichaly Cepero earned national player of the year honors last season as a sophomore.

the Olympics, a dream of Cepero's virtually from the day she was born.

But Cepero's dream also involves playing basketball. And to do it, she maintains a ridiculously rugged schedule.

She left volleyball's national championship celebration in Virginia early last year to join the Husker women's basketball team. Then from basketball, she had a couple weeks off before volleyball began its spring

drills. Her summer was spent playing pick-up games with her basketball teammates.

With volleyball in hot pursuit of another championship this fall, the cycle has begun all over again.

"I'm good right now," Cepero said. Her nodding head and smile tell you she's having just as much fun as a year ago. She insists she hasn't burned out from all the sets and set shots of a year spent playing two sports at NU.

But for Nebraska volleyball to win the title, Cook says Cepero has to show a spark. And not only on the court in matches, Cook expects Cepero to be in charge running the show every day in practice.

"It is pressure in a way because it seems like you've got to be on top of your game all the time," Cepero said. "You can't just check out for a little while.

"In other positions, you might be able to come in and out during drills in practice and take a rest. But when you're the setter, you have to be in there all the time. You have to be running the drills. If you check out for one little moment, the drill is going to

go the wrong way."

That in turn hurts everybody's confidence and threatens Nebraska's bid to repeat as national champ.

A year ago, Cepero redefined the setter position and pulled a young Nebraska team to the next level. No one can say for sure when it happened, but her passion, emotion, confidence and overwhelming athletic ability made the Huskers virtually unstoppable. Cepero won national player of the year honors in only her sophomore season.

This year, the midseason sentiment was that the Huskers had only scratched the surface in regard to expectations. Nebraska was ranked second and in the driver's seat to capture another Big 12 Conference championship.

Statistically, the team's attack percentage was excellent, but Cepero's own hitting numbers were down significantly from a year ago. Conversely, she's up in digs.

Cook blamed the slower-than-expected start on several reasons. First, Cepero was still slowed by an ankle injured this summer playing basketball. To complicate matters, she

was ill the weekend Nebraska lost its first match in two seasons at Long Beach State.

But Cepero won conference player of the week honors in October and was making strides with a team that showed flashes of brilliance against the likes of Kansas and Kansas State.

"This team is ready," Cepero said. "I have to take my game to another level so the team can follow me. Someday, it's just going to click. I think we're getting closer."

Cook agrees, but still works hard at motivating his setter everyday. He's drawn upon the traits of Nebraska's past setting heroes. And of all-everything Michael Jordan, who's making his own comeback these days.

"She understands basketball, and he's a great role model for willing teams and taking teams to another level," Cook said. "She has that in her personality to be able to do that.

"As this team becomes more comfortable with each other and their roles, ultimately it's going to revolve around Greicha and the setter position. She can take this team to another level." ■



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Making Waves

NU competes with Pac-10, WAC schools for top talent in Hawaii

By Doug Horwich

Few teams recruit coast-to-coast as profusely as Nebraska does, and even fewer venture as far as Hawaii to look for prospects. However, the Husker staff knows that developing new recruiting territories helps to compensate for a low in-state population base, and the team's success in Hawaii is a reflection of this strategy.

While the Huskers often compete against Southeastern Conference and Atlantic Coast Conference schools for southeast prospects and Big 12 schools for Texas prospects, Hawaii is a heavy Pac-10 and Western Athletic Conference territory, and Nebraska is usually competing against teams like Washington, Arizona and Utah — all long-time veterans of the Hawaii recruiting scene.

Many of these programs take early advantage of their proximity to the islands by inviting Hawaiian



Quarterback Curt Dukes of Newton, N.C., is one of Nebraska's seven commitments.

prospects to summer camps as early as age 14 or 15. These early bonds are hard to break, as Husker coaches found out with top offensive line prospect Chris Kemoeatu last year.

Kemoeatu ended up committing to Utah despite a fantastic visit to Lincoln.

In 1997, Nebraska experienced its first success in Hawaii, signing center Dominic Raiola from Honolulu's powerhouse St. Louis School. This set the stage for the addition of three more Hawaii prospects over the next two years.

In 1998, fellow St. Louis School prospect Tony Tata committed to the Huskers as a middle linebacker. In 1999, Kahuku's Toniau Fonoti and St. Louis School defensive tackle Tamotu "Junior" Tagoa'i joined the program and now figure prominently on the Huskers' offensive line.

Nebraska did not sign any Hawaii prospects in 2000 or 2001, but Husker assistant coach George Darlington appears to have a renewed interest in the state this year and is pursuing a select group of prospects. Additional Hawaii prospects are currently being evaluated by the staff, and more offers could be on the horizon.

The consensus top player in the state this year is defensive end Jonathan Mapu (6-foot-3, 265, 4.8) from Kahuku High School — the same school that sent Husker guard Toniau Fonoti to Lincoln. Mapu could play defensive end at the next level, or could bulk up and move inside to defensive tackle.

In the summer, Mapu seemed to favor Washington and Southern Cal heavily, to the exclusion of all other schools. However, he seems to be more open to expanding his horizons as the recruiting season progresses, and Nebraska has worked its way back into his top three and onto his list of official visits.

While Mapu's parents appeared earlier to prefer that their son attend a Pac-10 school, they now indicate that the decision will be Jonathan's to make.

Nebraska Commitments for 2002

Player	Hometown (school)	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
Curt Dukes	Newton (Newton-Conover), N.C.	6-2	210	QB
Matt Herian	Pierce, Neb.	6-5	225	TE
Mark LeFlore	Omaha (Central), Neb.	6-0	185	WR
Kurt Mann	Grand Island, Neb.	6-4 1/2	255	OL
Jay Moore	Elkhorn, Neb.	6-4 1/2	245	RE
Dane Todd	Lincoln (Southeast), Neb.	5-11 1/2	230	FB
DeMorrio Williams	Beckville, Texas (Kilgore College)	6-1	200	LB

"I don't know, but Nebraska is going to be one of them," his father said, in reference to Mapu's official visit plans. "He hasn't said any others, but Nebraska is going to be one of them."

Mapu is likely to take at least three visits before making a decision, and Nebraska, Washington and Wisconsin currently top his list. Mapu denies having a favorite at this time and may still visit Southern Cal, UCLA, Colorado or Tennessee. However, he has not yet scheduled any visits, preferring to wait until his season is over at the end of November.

Mapu indicated that his decision will be based on "where I feel comfortable and where I can play early."

While he realizes that he will probably not be able to be a starter in his first season, he does not want to sit out a year.

"Hopefully (I can) go in and get some playing time and not redshirt."

For a team very much in need of young rush end talent, a commitment from Mapu would go a long way toward allowing Nebraska to achieve its goals in recruiting this vital position.

Another rush end prospect who is starting to generate increased interest from the Husker staff is Donny Mateaki (6-6, 260, 4.8) from Honolulu's Iolani High School. Mateaki has been rumored to favor the Huskers for some time but has not yet received a written offer.

Mateaki is being recruited by a host of Pac-10 schools, including Washington, Arizona, California, Oregon, UCLA and Southern Cal and has also received offers from Wisconsin, Colorado, San Diego State, Utah and Hawaii. He has scheduled a visit to Lincoln for the weekend of Dec. 7 and may receive an offer prior to the visit.

Nebraska coaches also are evaluating other Hawaiian prospects, including Abraham Apilado (6-3, 290, 5.4) from Waimea High School. Apilado has not yet received a Husker offer but indicates that Nebraska coaches have been in frequent contact.

"They write me almost every day," he said.

In addition to the Huskers,

Recruit Williams a Success Story

By Rick Shaw

His high school coach marvels at the story of DeMorrio Williams, Nebraska's seventh oral commitment.

Originally from the small town of Beckville, Texas, Williams was a first team junior college All-American line-backer as a freshman at Kilgore (Texas) College. He was named a pre-season All-American this season and is widely considered to be one of the top 15 junior college prospects in the country for 2001.

"He has got that thing inside his heart that makes him win for you," Beckville High School Coach Ken Little said. "It is a wonderful success story that you can go from a little dinky town like Beckville and find your way to Nebraska, which I think is the No. 1 program in America."

The 6-foot-1, 200-pound Williams has plenty of speed to go along with his determination. He runs a 4.45-second 40-yard-dash and will play either safety or linebacker when he gets to Lincoln.

As an outside linebacker at Kilgore, Williams recorded a conference-high 130 tackles as a freshman in 2000. Thus far in 2001, Williams is averaging 10 tackles per game. Against rival Navarro College on Sept. 29, Williams registered 16 tackles, 3 sacks, one fumble recovery and two quarterback pressures.

"He is a soft-spoken kid with friendly eyes, but when he gets that helmet on, he is a deranged individual," Little said. "That is the kind that I like. I don't want to have to explain what sick 'em means."

Williams will have two years of eligibility remaining when he arrives in Lincoln.

— The only athlete scheduled to take an "official visit" to Nebraska for the Oklahoma game was current commitment Mark LeFlore. The 6-0, 185-pound speedster out Central High School in Omaha, Neb., was the first player to join Nebraska's recruiting class of 2002 when he committed to Husker coaches in October of 2000.

"I'm still a solid commit to Nebraska," LeFlore said. "It may be the intention of some other teams to change my mind, but I plan to take a couple of more visits just to get away and have fun."

LeFlore led the state in receiving with nearly 700 yards in eight games.

"We are more of a running team, but I am making the most of my opportunities," LeFlore said. "The last game, I only had two passes thrown to me, and one was for a 66-yard touchdown."

Despite committing to the Huskers, LeFlore continues to be actively recruited by several other schools. Tennessee, Colorado, Wisconsin, and Iowa are among a handful of schools that continue to contact the blue chip receiver.

"I have visits set up to Iowa and Colorado," LeFlore said, "and I may take a couple more. I can't see anything changing my mind from attending Nebraska. I'm mainly just trying to have fun with the recruiting process and get way from Omaha for a couple of trips." ■



DeMorrio Williams

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Apilado is also considering Colorado, Arizona and Hawaii and has indicated that distance is not a factor. Colorado currently appears to have the upper hand.

"I would prefer to go to Colorado. My coaches know Brian Cabral, as they used to play with him at St. Louis High School," Apilado said. "It is near the big mountains, and I think that I have family there."

However, Apilado's preferences could change after he has a chance to take a few official visits, and he is not yet prepared to eliminate any of his favorites from serious contention.

"I will consider any team right now," he said.

Apilado likes the Husker offense and would likely make a visit to Lincoln if offered.

"I just like the way they play and I guess they are a running team just like us," he said.

Back on the mainland, the Huskers have secured an official visit from perhaps the nation's top offensive tackle prospect.

Nathan Rhodes (6-7, 305, 5.1) from Bakersfield East High School in Bakersfield, Calif., recently scheduled a Jan. 11 visit to Lincoln — his fifth and final visit. Nebraska will have to withstand an early barrage from Washington, Tennessee and Michigan, but the Huskers still have an excellent shot at this top national prospect, who maintains that his favorites are "all even."

Another top offensive line prospect who has Nebraska on his visit list is Abner Estrada (6-4, 275, 5.2) from Turner High School in Carrollton, Texas. Estrada has been offered by the Huskers and has Nebraska in his final two, along with Miami.

"I have pretty much decided that my school will be either Nebraska or Miami," Estrada said. "I will visit both schools after my season is over. Most likely, those two schools are the only ones that I will visit."

Both the Huskers and Hurricanes have offered scholarships to the Texan.

"They both have great football programs and their coaches are nice," Estrada said. "Coach Gill from Nebraska is talking to me a lot."

Estrada recorded 26 pancakes in his first six games this season. ■



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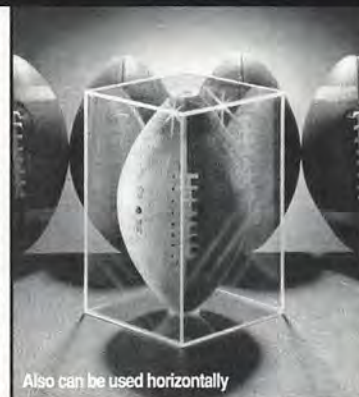
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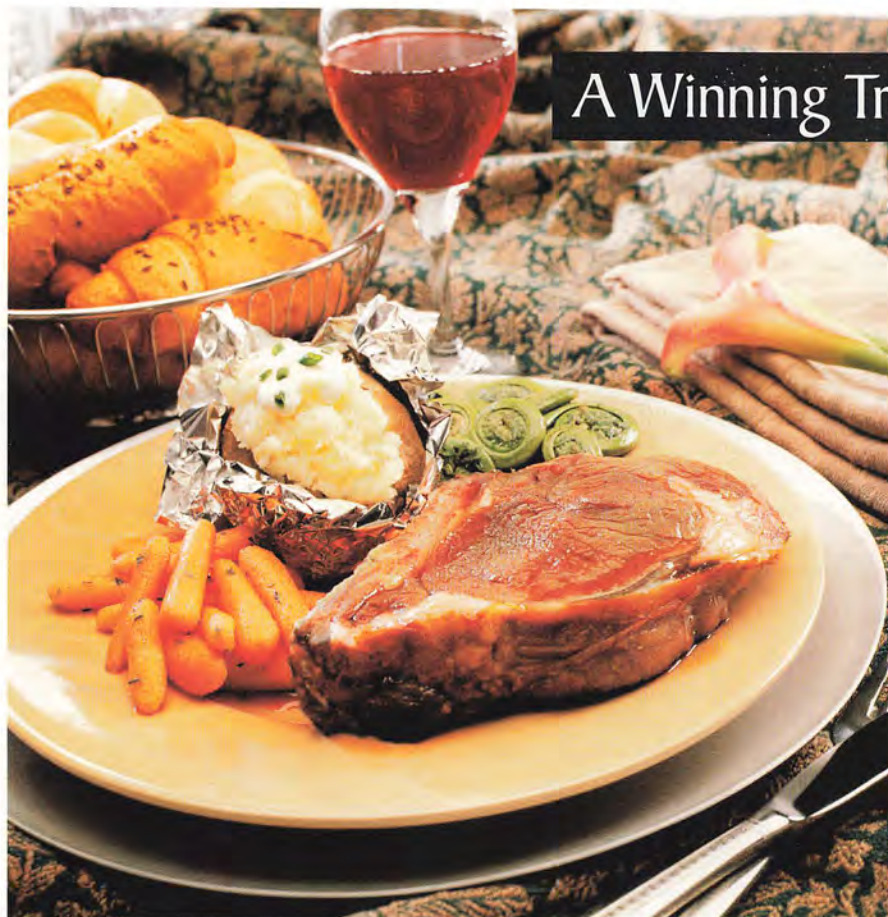
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Wingback Cornelsen scores his first touchdown in stadium where he attended games growing up



Mike BABCOCK

BEN CORNELSEN WAS EAGER to see his family so he could share the excitement of his 71-yard punt return for a touchdown in Nebraska's 51-7 victory at Kansas. Then what he had done would really sink in.

"It's great," he said. But it would be even better. He knew it would.

Besides, the initial celebration in the north end zone at Memorial Stadium early in the fourth quarter was a bit of a blur, not at all what he imagined it would be like.

"I was overwhelmed," he said, "really excited."

For one thing, the touchdown was the first of his Cornhusker career. And for another, it came against Kansas, which is barely a half-hour's drive from his home in Shawnee, Kan.

He attended games at Memorial Stadium growing up. And the Jayhawks recruited him during his stellar career at Shawnee Mission Northwest High School.

He might have considered Kansas more seriously if there hadn't been uncertainty on the Jayhawks' coaching staff. Glen Mason was out after nine seasons. And Terry Allen had been hired.

As a result, "I didn't feel comfortable," said Cornelsen, who was looking for stability.

So he accepted Nebraska's scholarship offer, as did high school teammates J.P. Wichmann and Grant Bunton, who subsequently gave up football and transferred to Kansas State.

Wichmann, a rush end, recovered a fumble, forced by Justin Smith, also a rush end, on Kansas's second possession. Even though the Cornhuskers couldn't convert the turnover into points — Josh Brown missed a 37-yard field goal — it set the tone for Nebraska's defensive play.

Smith hit Kansas quarterback Mario Kinsey from behind and knocked the ball loose. And Wichmann recovered at the Jayhawk 29-yard line. The Cornhuskers also intercepted two Kinsey passes.

Redshirted freshman cornerback Lornell McPherson intercepted his second pass of the season early in the third quarter and the Cornhuskers converted with a touchdown to increase their lead to 27-0.

Junior cornerback DeJuan Groce intercepted his third pass this season later in the third quarter, but Nebraska failed to capitalize. "It was nice to get as many turnovers as we did," said Wichmann.

What Nebraska didn't get was its first shutout of the season, even though for three quarters and part of the fourth it appeared that Kansas wouldn't score even if the

Cornhuskers left the field.

Kinsey, a freshman from Waco, Texas, was under constant pressure and finished with a net of minus-16 yards rushing. And he completed only 3-of-9 passes, with the two interceptions.

The Jayhawks' touchdown, capping an 80-yard drive, came against the reserves. "We were real upset about it," Wichmann said of the defense. "We broke down for that one."

As was the case for Cornelsen, the Kansas game was special for Wichmann, who occasionally came to basketball games at Allen Fieldhouse. "It's real comfortable down here," he said.

He also was recruited heavily by the Jayhawks.

Nebraska played well on special teams, getting 154 yards on eight punt returns. Most of the yardage came on two returns, Cornelsen's and a 50-yarder by Keyuo Craver.

Cornelsen's punt return for a touchdown was the Cornhuskers' first of the season, as well as their first since Bobby Newcombe's school-record 94-yard return against Missouri last season.

Cornelsen, who has 4.53 speed in the 40-yard dash, made it look easy. "I looked up and saw everybody blocked and saw everybody blocked," he said.

"All I had to do is make one person miss."

That one person was Jayhawks punter Chris Tyrrell, who couldn't catch Cornelsen or knock him out of bounds, despite having an angle on him.

Cornelsen's patience was a key to the return.

Even though he and Wichmann were members of the same recruiting class, Cornelsen has another season of eligibility while Wichmann's Cornhusker career is coming to a close.

Cornelsen didn't enroll until January of 1998, after being injured in an automobile accident. "I've been through some low times since I've been here," he said.

In addition to accident, he's been hampered by other injuries. But he's healthy now.

The punt return touchdown "means a lot, coming close to home," he said. "But it also means a lot because it's my first. This is something I'll always cherish."

"Hopefully, I'll get a chance to get some more."

For the time being, however, he was willing to settle for the one against Kansas. ■



Junior Ben Cornelsen returned a punt 71 yards for a touchdown.

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